

## Press release

6 July 2010

### **Public, patients and staff have their say on improving hospital services in north east London**

Many of the proposals developed by GPs, patients, doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals to reorganise health services in north east London have received broad support from local residents.

Over 60,000 documents were distributed and around 10,000 people got involved in roadshows, meetings and other events during the Health for north east London consultation which ran from 30 Nov 2009 to 22 March 2010.

More than 3,000 residents and organisations responded to the consultation offering their views and suggestions on proposed changes to health services in the area. The findings, published today, will be formally presented at a meeting, held in public, on 13 July at West Ham Football Club.

The Secretary of State has instructed primary care trusts to stop and review their reconfiguration proposals with local GPs and local authorities in order to provide assurance that their proposals meet additional tests of local support. The findings from this consultation will be carefully considered by local clinicians, including GPs, hospital doctors, nurses and other health professionals as part of the review process and used to inform a final set of proposals for change. No decisions will be made on any of the proposals until this work has been undertaken and all feedback has been reviewed.

Dr Mike Gill, Joint Clinical Director, Health for north east London and Medical Director and Consultant Geriatrician at Newham University Hospital NHS Trust said;

“The Health for north east London consultation has been a great success. We discussed our ideas for future health services with thousands of people and the feedback shows local people and patients want to see real changes in the NHS. People provided us with well-thought through answers which will help me and my colleagues during the coming months. We will now work closely with local partners to consider all the feedback and pull together a final set of clinical recommendations for change. No decisions will be made until this work has been undertaken.”

Most respondents to the consultation agreed with the proposal to perform complex vascular surgery at The Royal London and Queen’s Hospitals which will lead to better, safer care. The principles of separating planned and emergency surgery and separating children’s and adults’ A&Es were also welcomed by respondents. A number of the proposals for developing services at King George Hospital were also broadly supported including more planned surgery, renal dialysis, specialist services for children and enhanced services for adults and older people.

There was more support than disagreement for the following proposals;

- Providing surgery on children under two only at The Royal London (and not at Whipps Cross, Newham or King George Hospital)
- Providing urgent surgery and complex surgery on children under 15 at The Royal London and Queen’s Hospital (and not at Whipps Cross, Newham or King George Hospital)
- Providing care for children with more complex needs at The Royal London and Queen’s (and not at Homerton, Whipps Cross, Newham or King George Hospital)
- Moving all uncomplicated planned surgery from Queen’s Hospital to King George Hospital
- The Royal London and Queen’s becoming the major acute hospitals for the sector.

There was more disagreement than support from respondents about;

- Changing the number of A&Es and maternity delivery departments from six to five
- Over a third of respondents did not agree with proposals to move A&E and maternity delivery services from King George Hospital.

Dr John Coakley, joint Clinical Director of the Health for north east London programme and Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine at Homerton Hospital said;

“We are very grateful for the support of Local Involvement Networks (LINKs), councils’ Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other local groups, which have helped us to understand the views of thousands of local people.

“More doctors, nurses, GPs and health professionals have been invited to join the clinical working groups to review the feedback from consultation. We are also looking at ways we can further strengthen the role of councils, patients and the public in shaping local health services.”

An independent assessment of the impact of the proposals found that patients would benefit from change.

Sir Cyril Chantler, Chair of the Integrated Impact Assessment steering group said;

"The reconfiguration proposals have the potential to bring benefit to the population of north east London in terms of improved health, wellbeing and clinical outcomes. Many of the positive impacts would be of particular advantage to people from equality groups, such as older people, disabled people, people from BME groups and those living in deprived areas. There are some areas of concern and the committee has made suggestions to deal with these."

During the consultation respondents expressed concerns about the proposals for maternity services, particularly about the size of proposed maternity units.

Carol Drummond, Head of Midwifery, Queen’s Hospital said;

“The most important change we want to make to maternity services is to give every mother in north east London the same high quality, one to one care no matter where she lives or where she chooses to have her baby. Women who are considered to have a low-risk pregnancy should be able to give birth at home or in a less clinical environment if they wish.

“Early in the consultation we recognised that many people wanted smaller, more personal midwife-led units to be developed alongside the doctor-led units in the area. Midwives, doctors and GPs are now working together to see how we can amend our plans to provide more personal care.”

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors:**

1. Following advice from the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) the Secretary of State, Andrew Lansley confirmed on 24 June 2010 that the Health for north east London consultation should continue; “The IRP considers that it is in the best interests of local health services for the current consultation process to run its full course... This referral is not suitable for full review.” Read the full IRP’s statement [here](#)
2. The Secretary of State has introduced a moratorium for all reconfiguration proposals in order for the NHS to provide assurance that their proposals meet four new tests (in addition to the existing legislative framework). The tests will require reconfiguration proposals to demonstrate:

- support from GP commissioners;
- strengthened public and patient engagement (including local authorities);
- clarity on the clinical evidence base; and
- consistency with current and prospective patient choice.

Over the coming months we will be strengthening our engagement with GPs and local authorities and developing proposals that will improve the health of the local population.

In addition to our ongoing work with the JOSCs, informal discussions and consideration of council responses to the consultation, we will agree a process to further strengthen our engagement with local authorities in line with the Secretary of State's announcement.

3. The consultation was led by doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals from:
  - NHS Barking and Dagenham
  - NHS City and Hackney
  - NHS Havering
  - NHS Newham
  - NHS Redbridge
  - NHS Tower Hamlets
  - NHS Waltham Forest
  - Barts and the London NHS Trust
  - Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust
  - Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
  - Newham University Hospital NHS Trust
  - Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust
4. Consultation responses were analysed by external assessors Ipsos MORI who prepared an independent report on their findings. Full results of the consultation can be found [here](#)
5. An **NHS primary care trust** (PCT) is a type of NHS trust, part of the National Health Service in England, that provides some primary and community services or commissions them from other providers, and are responsible for commissioning secondary care.
6. Journalists are invited to attend the meeting of the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts, 5pm – 8.30pm, 13 July, West Ham Football Club. If you require any further information, would like to attend the meeting or would like to interview any of our spokespeople please contact Una Carney on [una.carney@thpct.nhs.uk](mailto:una.carney@thpct.nhs.uk) or 020 7092 5495. The number for urgent out of hours queries is 07813 023 740.