

Brent Birth Centre: Public Consultation Feedback

Report to Harrow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the responses received during the Brent Birth Centre public consultation which started in November 2007 ended on 8 February 2008. It outlines the next steps in terms of the communication and implementation of the consultation outcome.

2. Responses to the consultation

A report summarising responses to the consultation has been published and provides a detailed breakdown of responses from the questionnaire, feedback from key forums held through the consultation period and from stakeholder organisations. The report also provides information about the activities held before and during the consultation to ensure engagement with the local community, users of the service and NHS staff. This can viewed on the website www.nwlh.nhs.uk/brentbirth

There were a range of responses to the proposals. However, in general terms, individuals who had used the Centre personally fed back that they felt the Centre should remain open and felt it offered an excellent service.

In contrast, whilst again the current service quality was recognised, the majority of organisations (eight out of a total of 11) who responded to the consultation understood the rationale for change and have indicated their support for Option 4 – the transfer of the midwifery led unit service to Northwick Park Hospital, maintaining antenatal care at the Central Middlesex Hospital site.

The National Childbirth Trust requested more information and data before a final decision on the future of the centre was made, while the Brent and Harrow Supervisors of Midwives said they wished the Brent Birth Centre to remain in its present state.

As part of the consultation, more than 4,000 questionnaires were sent out to women who had registered to deliver their baby at Northwick Park Hospital's maternity unit and the Brent Birth Centre. The PCT and the Trust hoped to gain a clearer understanding of the reasons why the Brent Birth Centre is not popular with mothers as well as grasp the factors which influence the choice of unit for expectant mothers. Responses received suggested their choice of birth location was determined by a number of factors, with the two most important factors being medical back-up and distance.

A number of responses asked for clarification or asked for reassurance regarding the proposed option. The majority of these enquiries have been responded to during the consultation process. However, where appropriate, for example where individuals or organisations have asked for assurances should Option 4 proceed, the Trust and PCT will be following up these up

3. Final decision

The report and responses to the consultation were considered by the Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust at a special public meeting on 6 March.

At this meeting the PCT confirmed its supports for option four - to transfer the Brent Birth Centre to Northwick Park Hospital and provide antenatal care from Central Middlesex Hospital.

The report has also been circulated to key stakeholders and a letter informing has been issued to everyone involved in the consultation process.

4. Next steps

The Trust is now required to seek the endorsement of the Brent Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the final report and consultation process was fair and thorough.

The PCT has also asked the Trust to undertake a health impact assessment in order to ensure any issues are addressed before any changes to services to take place. The PCT Board was also conscious of the concerns made by a number of respondents on transport issues for antenatal patients. The Trust will ensure this is taken into account in its health impact assessment.

An implementation plan will be developed subject to endorsement from Brent OSC. This will include clear timeframes and will be developed in conjunction with relevant stakeholders. This will include providing the assurances and addressing concerns that have been raised by stakeholders during the consultation

5. Service feedback

The consultation provided an enormous amount of general feedback about the maternity service. This will be reviewed by the Maternity Service and Clinical Leads in order to support ongoing development and improvement of the service.

6. Continued involvement

The Trust and PCT would welcome the continued involvement of the Harrow Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the new Centre is developed

**Fiona Wise, Chief Executive
The North West London Hospitals NHS Trust**

**Mark Easton, Chief Executive
Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust**