

Report to: NHS Harrow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report from: NHS Harrow, NHS Brent and North West London Hospitals NHS Trust

Date of Meeting: 24 November 2009

RE: Public consultation on children's services

1. Purpose of report

To ask the OSC to establish an additional meeting in early January 2010 to consider the proposed public consultation on the reconfiguration of paediatric services across Harrow and Brent.

The meeting would need to be held before 8th January 2010 to enable a full 12 week public consultation to be completed before a seven week *purdah* is issued in advance of the general and local government elections.

2. Why are the extraordinary meetings required?

As detailed in the previous OSC paper¹ the local NHS' ability to commence public consultation prior to Christmas was dependent upon Department of Health (DH) approval and National Clinical Advisory Team's² (NCAT) ability to review the proposed clinical model before the Brent Health Select Committee on 9 December and the November Harrow OSC.

Unfortunately, due to capacity constraints, the NCAT and DH reviews will not now be completed until 18 December. The next Harrow OSC is due on 28 January and the Brent Health Select Committee does not meet until 17 February which does not allow sufficient time to consult prior to the elections.

The local NHS is therefore requesting that both OSCs schedule two extraordinary meetings prior to 8 January to consider the public consultation proposal. Please note that the meetings will not be required if NCAT does not approve the clinical model.

3. Why can't the public consultation wait until after the national and local elections?

OSC members will recall (from the meeting on 3 November) that the local NHS is eager to reconfigure children's' services in advance of the wider North West London sector review scheduled in later summer 2010. If public consultation is deferred until after the elections then the changes will have to be considered as part of the wider sector review. The Acute Services Project Board is concerned that the sector review could take a significant time to be

¹ Reconfiguration of emergency surgery and paediatrics across NHS Brent and Harrow, Harrow OSC, 3 November 2009.

² All reconfiguration proposals that require public consultation are subject to initial clinical assurance provided by NCAT members.

implemented and the needs of Harrow and Brent children and their parents and carers may not be addressed for over 18 months.

OSC members have been sent a draft report on the pre-consultation process which has included 325 local parents and carers. 91% of the public agreed or strongly agreed with the case for change and 98% agreed with the local NHS' proposal.

OSC members will recall that under the proposed model of care, consultant paediatricians will be available to give children an expert assessment until 10 pm during the week, at both hospitals with increased cover at weekends. This is an increase of over 100% in access to a paediatrician.

As a result, fewer children will be admitted to hospital with conditions like asthma and gastroenteritis which don't need to be treated in hospital; parents will receive the reassurance they require and resources will be saved to invest in alternative services and facilities closer to home.

4. Recommendations

Both Brent and Harrow OSCs are asked to establish an additional meeting before 8 January to consider the proposed public consultation on the reconfiguration of paediatric services across Harrow and Brent.