



Fit for the Future

Briefing No 5 April 2007

Consultation

The public consultation about proposed changes to health services in outer North East London – known as Fit for the Future – is likely to begin in October 2007, rather than the spring, as previously announced.

However the consultation on proposed changes to local mental health services will take place prior to October 2007 and a timetable is being agreed with NHS London, the strategic health authority for the capital.

The decision to start the main consultation later than planned was taken by the steering group of the seven NHS organisations undertaking the review, in order to allow further work to be completed on the implications of any changes on health services across the whole of North East London and to review all the information gathered to date. Following publication of its “Case for Change” at the beginning of March 2007, NHS London has asked that further work with the NHS in inner North East London is undertaken before options for change are taken to public consultation. This work will include consideration of the location of specialist centres, such as stroke, within the area and the likely impact on existing local hospitals.

It is estimated that this work will take three months with additional time being allowed once it has been completed to ensure that its findings and implications are incorporated into the final options for change which go out to consultation.

This extra time will also allow the programme to develop further the plans for care outside hospital. Feedback from patients and local residents over the past months have been particularly helpful in enabling our plans to be refined as to how more services can be provided in the community.

Clinical review

In common with other reconfiguration programmes and as stipulated in Sir Ian Carruthers’ report (published at the end of February 2007), a clinical review of the changes proposed as part of Fit for the Future will be undertaken by a clinician from outside outer North East London, in order to ensure its independence and objectivity. Details of this review and who will undertake it will be given as soon as these are available.

Mental health services

The North East London Mental Health NHS Trust has been working closely with service users, carers and other stakeholders to develop a better model for delivery of mental health services. This review of local mental health services has been undertaken in parallel to (but as part of) the Fit for the Future programme. In order to maintain the momentum of the mental health services improvements, a separate consultation will now take place ahead of the Fit for the Future consultation to reach decisions about:

- The future location of inpatient mental health services for patients from Barking and Dagenham and Havering, which are currently located outside of outer NE London in Mascalls Park, Brentwood. Planning consent for this unit is time limited, and it is important that this service is moved closer to the people it serves as soon as possible;
- The best way to deliver care to mental health services in the future;

Previous briefings – including details of the shortlist of five options – are available on the websites of each of the PCTs and trusts involved in Fit for the Future.

For further information on the Fit for the Future programme, please contact Ann Smart (Ann.Smart@bdpct.nhs.uk).