



## Fit for the Future

### **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **LOCAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS SHAPE THE FUTURE**

Hospital doctors, nurses, GPs and community health professionals from across Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest came together this week to work through the options for change proposed under the Fit for the Future programme with Sir George Alberti, National Director for Emergency Access in the NHS.

As part of a wide-ranging discussion, Sir George set out the national context in which similar proposals for change are being considered across the country. Driven by medical advances and new drugs, the reduction in doctors' working hours and, above all, by the public desire for more services to be available in community settings, these proposals need to achieve the right balance between care delivered locally and in specialist centres of excellence.

The changes proposed focus on delivering the right care in the right place. For example, around half of local people who currently go Accident and Emergency departments in outer North East London do not need the specialist care which they can provide and could be treated more quickly and effectively elsewhere, for example, in urgent care centres or walk-in centres, staffed by GPs and nurses. Under the current proposals, an urgent care centre would be located in each borough.

Hilary Ayerst, Chief Executive of Barking & Dagenham Primary Care Trust and Chair of the Fit for the Future Steering Group, said: "Doctors, nurses and other health professionals – those who care for local people every day – have been closely involved in developing proposals for changes to health services in outer North East London from the outset.

"Patient safety is paramount and the five options under consideration were shortlisted only once clinical representatives from across the four boroughs were satisfied that patient safety would be assured.

"Sir George Alberti's visit has provided another opportunity for local clinicians to test the proposals outlined in each of the options."

All viable options for change will be subject to formal public consultation. No decision has yet been made as to which options will go out to consultation.

**For further information, please contact Henrietta Joy on 020 8532 6306**

Notes for Editors:

1. The seven organisations undertaking the Fit for the Future programme are as follows:

Barking & Dagenham Primary Care Trust  
Havering Primary Care Trust  
Redbridge Primary Care Trust  
Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust  
Barking, Havering & Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust  
Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust  
North East London Mental Health NHS Trust

2. The Fit for the Future programme aims to:

- improve the quality and suitability of local health services to the local population;
- provide local health and social services which address local health inequalities and respond to national and local strategies, in particular, *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say* (the White Paper care outside hospital);
- maximise the opportunities presented by the opening of the new Queen's Hospital;
- ensure that the whole health economy achieves sustainable financial balance.

3. *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say* is available on the Department of Health website at [www.dh.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gsi.gov.uk)

4. Regular updates on the Fit for the Future programme are available on the websites of the NHS organisations undertaking the review (see above).