

Stakeholder Brief

Special Edition

4th June 2010

Transforming Community Services update

Work continues to transform community health services in Worcestershire with a public involvement exercise being scheduled as the next element of the work programme. As was outlined in the previous Stakeholder Brief Special Edition the Strategic Health Authority gave their 'approval in principle' to the proposals that were put forward by NHS Worcestershire at the end of March.

These proposals were to:

- Transfer a number of services to Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust - Breast Screening, COPD,

Diabetic Nursing, Heart Failure, TB Nursing, Rheumatology Nursing (Wyre Forest)

- Move all of the other community services into a new organisation that would be created to also manage mental health services, with the existing Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust being dissolved
- Further explore how community nursing and therapy services could work closer together with local GPs and Practice Based Commissioners.

The plan has been for this to be implemented with effect from April 2011.

National review of proposals and additional Strategic Health Authority feedback

These proposals were also then subjected to a review nationally by the Department of Health which has been examining all of the Transforming Community Services work that Primary Care Trusts across the country have been undertaking. This review led to some more guidance and a request for further information and assurance relating to the proposals for the children's community health services.



This was a requirement made nationally so that the Department of Health could be assured that effective safeguarding processes would remain in place and to make sure that services were appropriately aligned with the Local Authority. The second element of the feedback from the national review for Worcestershire was a requirement to submit a business case to the Co-operation and Competition Panel which wanted to explore the impact of the proposed changes on the market for NHS services locally and on patient choice.

Subsequently the Strategic Health Authority have also asked all of the PCTs in the West Midlands area to consider opportunities for working closer together on the provision of prison health services, dental health services and TB tracing.

New Government policy

The Transforming Community Services work to date has been undertaken under the previous Government so it is important for NHS organisations to review proposals in light of any new guidance or policies that emerge from the new Government. The documentation released two weeks ago – [The Coalition: Our Programme for Government](#) – includes a section on plans for the

NHS, with several relevant points relating to community services. Most importantly, it is clear that the new Government will only consider service reconfigurations and changes where they are supported by local clinicians, GPs and patients. Local GPs are also very obviously going to be more involved in the local commissioning of services so their view becomes extremely important in terms of the final proposals.

The indications are that the new Government will publish a White Paper on health in early July which may include references to Transforming Community Services, and there is likely to be further information that is made available before then. It remains important to make sure whatever is proposed for Worcestershire is consistent with national policy for community health services so that the necessary approvals stay in place.

Involvement and consultation exercise

NHS Worcestershire has remained committed to undertaking further involvement work to get additional input from patients and the public about how they would like community health services to be developed and to establish what support there is for the initial proposals. It will be

important through this exercise to also invite further comment from local GPs and clinicians, and crucially from members of staff currently working in these services.

An Involvement Plan has been agreed by NHS Worcestershire's Patient and Public Involvement Sub Committee and includes the production of some documentation explaining the issues and progress to date, as well as outlining the options and approach taken so far. Once any changes to the national policy in this area are clearer this document will be published and the more intensive involvement work will commence.

It will be important to give sufficient time to allow for the full range of views from patients and the public to be considered and, in line with the Cabinet Office Code of Good Practice on consultation, the involvement work will last for a minimum of 12 weeks.



Further updates on the timescales and more information about the national developments in relation to Transforming Community Services will be circulated as soon as this is available.

In the meantime please email comments and questions to communications@worcestershire.nhs.uk