

Report From: Director of Operations
To: Trust Board, 2nd December 2004
Subject: Children's Services report
Action: To Note and comment

Executive Summary

Dacorum PCT have published a Consultation document regarding the future shape of Hospital Children's services in West Hertfordshire. This report describes the main elements of the changes proposed, and some of the potential implications for the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

Board members are asked to note and comment on the report.

Nigel Coomber
Director of Operations

24th November 2004

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW – SUMMARY REPORT FOR WEST HERTFORDSHIRE HOSPITALS TRUST BOARD

1. Introduction

Dacorum Primary Care Trust have recently published a Consultation document entitled “Caring for Children”, which sets out a number of proposed changes to hospital services for children and young people in West Hertfordshire. This paper describes the main aspects of these proposals and concentrates particularly on the impact that they may have on services provided by the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

2. The current provision of Children's Services

The children's wards at both Hemel Hempstead General Hospital (St Nicholas ward) and Watford General Hospital (Hornet's ward) are managed by the Hertfordshire Partnership Trust, as are most of the paediatric medical and nursing staff within West Hertfordshire. However, the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust also provides a wide range of acute children's services as follows:

- SCBU/Neonatal services
- Children's Accident & Emergency services
- Paediatric surgery (surgeons, theatre staff, Day Surgery Unit)
- Paediatric Burns & Plastic surgery (at Mount Vernon Hospital)
- A range of diagnostic services (radiology, pathology, etc.)

Changes to the way that the ward services are configured would therefore necessarily impact upon the provision of services within this Trust as well as Hertfordshire Partnerships Trust.

3. Summary of proposals

The following is an extract from the Executive Summary of the Consultation document

“Current children's hospital services:

Watford Hospital	Hemel Hempstead Hospital
outpatients departments	outpatient departments
inpatient ward	inpatient ward
community nursing	community nursing
special care baby unit and full maternity services	midwife led birth centre
dedicated children's emergency and assessment unit	

Investing In Your Health outlines a programme where services are provided in West Hertfordshire as follows:

Watford Hospital	Hemel Hempstead Hospital
outpatients department	outpatient department
inpatient ward	children's day unit
dedicated Children's Rapid Assessment Unit	dedicated Children's Rapid Assessment Unit
enhanced community nursing team	enhanced community nursing team
special care baby unit and full maternity service	midwife led birth centre

This consultation paper, *Caring for children – improving hospital services for children and young people in West Hertfordshire*, focuses on the detailed proposals to make this model work.”

As the above indicates, the significant change proposed in respect of Children's Hospital services, is the move from an inpatient ward to a Children's Day Unit at Hemel Hempstead General Hospital. There is also a proposed development of a dedicated children's Rapid Assessment Unit at Hemel Hempstead to mirror that which already exists at Watford. Some further details of the changes are also provided within the Consultation document as follows:

- (a) Children's Rapid Assessment Unit – this is to be a short-stay emergency, observation and treatment facility with designated staff, located near to the A & E department. This will operate for 12 hours each day, although the precise opening times are still to be agreed as part of the Consultation.
- (b) Children's Day Unit (Hemel Hempstead) – this will be established on the premise that the vast majority of children's elective surgery can be carried out as a Day Case. It would have approximately 10 beds, and will mainly accommodate general paediatric surgery and ENT.
- (c) Inpatient ward (Watford) – the current 14 bedded wards at Hemel and Watford would be replaced by one 26 bedded ward in the Maternity block at Watford General Hospital. This would cater for all general paediatric inpatients from across West Hertfordshire.

4. Specific issues for the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

The configuration described above will require a changes to some of the services provided by the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust. Specifically, we will need to consider the following:

- (a) the mechanisms for treating and transferring any children attending the A & E department at Hemel Hempstead at times when the Rapid Assessment Unit is not open
- (b) the management of the various shifts in activity both surgical, elective and general emergency work that this model implies.

- (c) control of the capital project to develop the Rapid Assessment Unit on the Hemel Hempstead site
- (d) changes in theatre allocations to ensure that sufficient paediatric surgery can be carried out on a day case basis at Hemel Hempstead
- (e) the changes in demand on diagnostic services out-of-hours, particularly in radiology which may require a compensating shift of resources from Hemel Hempstead.

5. Consultation process and response

The Consultation period runs until 14th January 2005. Within the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust, the Consultation document has been shared with all clinical divisions, and with corporate departments. Comments are being collated by Liz Rippon, Acting Head of Service Planning, who will compile a composite response on behalf of the Trust in time to meet the January deadline.

6. Conclusion

The proposals outlined in the Consultation document “Caring for Children” will, if implemented, have implications for services provided by the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust. These proposals are therefore being reviewed by managers and clinicians within the Trust so that a response can be formulated. This response will then form the basis for constructive dialogue with both the PCTs and the Hertfordshire Partnership Trust as this work moves forward.

The Trust Board are invited to note and comment upon the issues raised in this report.