

## Stakeholder briefing – October 2017

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### NHS Let's Talk – decisions made on service changes

A special joint committee, made up of representatives from East and North Hertfordshire CCG and Herts Valleys CCG, met yesterday (Thursday 12 October) and made a number of decisions about NHS services in the county.

The decisions, made at a lengthy meeting held in public, followed a 10-week public consultation on a series of proposals, designed to make best use of the money and resources available to the local NHS and encourage people to live healthier lives, avoiding preventable illnesses. All proposals were debated in full and the committee heard from members of the public who wanted to share their personal experiences of some of the issues.

#### The changes are:

- Requiring people who smoke or whose weight is classified as obese to improve their health before they have non-urgent surgery – unless waiting for surgery would be more harmful.
- Gluten-free food will not be available on prescription, with the exception of patients with learning disabilities or where there are welfare concerns.
- Limiting the routine prescription of medicines, products and food supplements for short-term conditions and minor ailments, except in exceptional circumstances. In future, people will need to buy these themselves from pharmacies or shops.

- Female sterilisation will only be funded in exceptional circumstances, which would be assessed on a case-by-case basis if alternative forms of long-acting contraception are unsuitable.
- The CCG will only fund one cycle of IVF for patients who meet the criteria, this is a change from the previous policy, of funding up to three cycles.

During an extensive public engagement campaign - which included meetings, drop-in discussion events, press coverage and a social media campaign – thousands of online and postal responses were received from members of the public, special interest groups, clinicians, local wellbeing groups and providers of specialist fertility services.

**Dr Hari Pathmanathan, a Hertfordshire GP and Chair of East and North Hertfordshire CCG said:**

“I would like to thank all those who have taken part in the consultation process. The consultation proposals were developed by local GPs and public health doctors, with the best interests of the whole patient population of our area in mind. These decisions haven’t been taken lightly and our conversations with the public have demonstrated that many people understand the challenges faced by the NHS in Hertfordshire and beyond.

“Some of the changes we put forward for consideration have already taken place in other areas and some, like our gluten-free policy, are currently being considered nationally.

“We understand that some of our patients will have to make changes and they will be supported to do so, for example with the free weight-loss and stop-smoking advice sessions already on offer.

“There is a significant level of public support for most of the changes that have been agreed – even from people who told us that they would be directly affected by the policy changes that we proposed. Our fitness for surgery proposal is a good example of this – 84% of those who responded thought this would mean that they themselves would need to either stop smoking or lose weight if they needed a non-urgent operation, but agreed with this policy.”

**Dr Nicky Williams, Deputy Clinical Chair of East and North Hertfordshire CCG, and a Ware GP, said:**

“These policy decisions will not take away any GP’s ability to make decisions based on the individual welfare needs of their patients, such as a child or someone whose wellbeing must be safeguarded. GPs will also be able to refer individual cases to a specialist decision-making panel, if they feel that their patient faces unique clinical circumstances.

“Most people in the East and North Hertfordshire CCG area who responded to our consultation told us that they wanted to retain some NHS funding for IVF and specialist fertility services, so I am pleased that our CCG has been able to do this, although provision has been reduced to one cycle. I understand that those currently receiving specialist fertility treatment will be concerned about the implications for their care and they will be contacted to discuss their individual circumstances.

“East and North Hertfordshire CCG will now begin work on a detailed implementation and awareness-raising plan for all of today’s decisions, prioritising the needs of the patients who will be affected.”

If you would like to read the full papers from the decision-making meeting, including the feedback from the public consultation, please visit the [Healthier Future website here](#).



## Non-emergency patient transport

The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust is now providing non-emergency patient transport in Bedfordshire, Luton and Hertfordshire, following the winding-up of ‘Private Ambulance Service’, the company which previously delivered this service.

Providing a high quality, safe service for our patients is our absolute priority. Together with the other CCGs in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, we have been working closely with UNISON and the East of England Ambulance Service to ensure that services transfer over to the new provider smoothly. We have been working hard to make sure that disruption is kept to an absolute minimum during this transition.

Feedback from patients and hospital staff suggests that the new service has been working well, with patients being collected on time to attend their outpatient appointments. We will continue to monitor the service to check that patients’ needs are being met.

Patients who wish to check their eligibility for transport or to book a journey should call 01603 481208. The contact centre is open 8am-6pm from Monday-Friday, with an answer machine service operating outside of these hours.

## Hatfield HealthFest

We teamed up with both East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust and Hertfordshire HealthWalks to mark World Alzheimer's Day at the recent Hatfield HealthFest event.

As well as raising awareness of dementia and encouraging communities to become dementia-friendly, we joined a short memory walk around Hatfield – emphasising the importance of physical activity and keeping healthy to prevent dementia. We also asked members of the public to share a memory which will be included in memory boxes for the dementia wards at Lister Hospital.



## Hertfordshire's key role in Green Paper review



Hertfordshire was one of 10 health and wellbeing areas that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) chose to visit as part of the national thematic review into children and young people's mental health services (CAMHS).

Last week's fieldwork saw more than 70 professionals from across schools, health and social care meet the CQC review team, who are contributing to a new Green Paper on children and young people's mental health, as well as groups of young people, parents and carers.

Hertfordshire was the final area visited with Green Paper author, Catherine Tyack, from the Department of Health accompanying the review team last Wednesday. She heard first-hand about Hertfordshire Partnership NHS University Foundation Trust's (HPFT) community eating disorder and perinatal mental health teams.

"This was a great opportunity to showcase all of the good work that has been done across all organisations in Hertfordshire to improve children and young people's emotional wellbeing through Hertfordshire's CAMHS transformation," said Maria Nastri, CAMHS Transformation Manager.

"The CQC team paid tribute to all the professionals they met, saying they 'take their hat off' to them. They were impressed with the progress we've made in the last two years."

The Prime Minister announced the review of children and young people's mental health services in January 2017 and the Green Paper is due to be published later this month, with a White Paper following in spring 2018.

## Winter pressures – extra services on offer

With the ‘winter pressures’ season approaching, we are pleased to announce that our CCG successfully bid for £600,000 from NHS England to provide additional GP appointments in the winter during normal surgery hours. We’re one of the only CCGs in the country to get this financial support.

This funding is being supplemented by an additional £570k set aside from our own budget for additional appointments outside of ‘core’ hours. This will help to fund additional GP visits to care homes over the winter, enabling GPs to catch any developing health problems early on.

For the Stevenage locality alone, this money will provide a total of 6,030 additional appointments in ‘core hours’ and an additional 4,044 appointments outside of normal hours.

You can play your part to help the NHS this winter. Children, older people, carers, people with learning and physical disabilities and pregnant women are just some of those at particular risk from catching ‘flu. If you fall into one of these categories, please ensure that you take up your free ‘flu vaccination from your GP practice or pharmacist without delay. Every year, ‘flu puts the NHS under extra pressure – be part of the solution – and tell your friends too.



## New wheelchair service launched

**At the start of this month, a new county-wide wheelchair service for adults and children began, which aims to be more convenient and offer a wider choice of wheelchairs for customers.**



Millbrook Healthcare, which has been running the service for the last 18 months, will now run the service for the next five years after being awarded the contract by Hertfordshire’s two clinical commissioning groups.

The service will continue to run from its fully accessible premises in Welwyn Garden City and people will be assessed and have their chair adapted and repaired from the same venue. The new service has cut the time it takes for people to get their wheelchair following their assessment, with just over a third of customers getting a ‘chair in a day’.

The service is also trialling extra drop-in clinics that will offer some appointments in other locations, such as schools and rehabilitation units, to reach people where they already are. Weekly evening and Saturday morning clinics are also being piloted.

Dr Hari Pathmanathan, a Hertfordshire GP and Chair of East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "Wheelchairs provided and maintained in Hertfordshire are an essential part of daily life for almost one in a hundred of our county's residents. Wheelchair users, their families and carers all contributed to the development of the new service, which should help to ensure that their needs are met even more effectively in future."

## Our annual general meeting



Visitors to our annual general meeting (AGM) last month enjoyed a gentle exercise class and a 'singing for the brain' session as part of a packed afternoon of talks, workshops and activities.

Members of the public and representatives from community organisations found out more about the work of the CCG, our financial position and our plans for the future.

Cleo Lee (pictured, centre) told one of the AGM workshops about the way in which her personal health budget has empowered her to take control of her care and support. By using some of her budget to employ her own personal trainer and buy adapted gym equipment, Cleo has restored strength to her arms, which has helped her to regain her independence and improved her confidence. Cleo attended the workshop with her partner, as well as Lilian Beasant and Jo Reeder, who are working on personal health budgets and integrated personal commissioning project at the CCG.

If you weren't able to attend the event and would like to read our 2016/17 Annual Report, you can download a copy by visiting: <http://www.enhertscg.nhs.uk/our-annual-report> or read a short summary [here](#).

## Working together to improve end of life and palliative care

**East and North Hertfordshire CCG is marking this year's Hospice Care Week (9-15 October) by raising awareness of a collaborative plan which aims to improve services both for those reaching the end of their lives and for their loved ones.**



East and North Hertfordshire CCG has been working with Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust, East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust, local hospices and carers organisations to help patients who are approaching the end of their life to live as well as possible and support them to die in a place of their choosing.

Talking about dying is difficult for many people but it's really important to discuss the subject with both your family and your GP so that everyone knows what your wishes are when the time comes and can plan for them.

We know that good quality palliative and end of life care can have a profound impact on a patient and their family in the last days of life and after death. We want to give everyone access to the same good quality care and encourage people to discuss how and where they would prefer to die, whether it be in their own home, in a hospice or hospital. By working closely together with our providers and our hospices, more than 79% of people died in a place of their choice – a rise from the previous year. This is an important way of measuring how well we are doing in our work to improve end of life services.

We're also putting in place technology to help GPs support families – like our new shared computer platform and our Electronic Palliative Care Co-ordination System record (EPaCCs). We want to empower people to make plans for their lives and for their death, so that they can be cared for in accordance with their wishes.

The hospices in east and north Hertfordshire – Isabel Hospice in Welwyn Garden City and Garden House Hospice in Letchworth are active partners in the CCG's work to improve end of life care. And hospices aren't just there for the very last days of a person's life. They support adults and children living with life-limiting illness to live life as fully as possible. They offer a wide range of care for inpatients as well as day hospice services and they also provide other activities such as physiotherapy, massage, counselling and rehabilitation sessions, for example classes for people recovering from a heart attack.

The palliative and end of life strategy can be viewed on the CCG website here: [www.enhertscg.nhs.uk/endoflife](http://www.enhertscg.nhs.uk/endoflife)

## Lessons for ‘A Healthier Future’ from a care homes ‘vanguard’

Next month we will be showcasing the work of our care homes ‘vanguard’ and demonstrating how the positive outcomes achieved through this nationally endorsed programme can be integrated more widely into the health and care system across Hertfordshire, west Essex and beyond.



There will be workshops on:

- improving hospital discharge processes - the role of the ‘Impartial Assessor’ and the care home ‘Red Bag’ scheme
- multi-disciplinary working – how pharmacists can make a difference in care homes and how the Early Intervention Vehicle is supporting frail people
- Technology in care homes - NHS.net and real-time GP access to patient records
- Workforce development – up-skilling care home staff to prevent avoidable hospital admissions.

The event on Thursday 2 November (from 10am to 3pm) at the Fielder Centre, Hatfield will be a productive day, sharing innovation, ideas and learning. William Roberts, the National Lead for Enhanced Health in Care Homes, part of the New Care Models Programme, will open the event with an overview of all of the Vanguard schemes and there will be input from fellow Vanguards from across the UK. If you would like to find out more, visit: [www.enhertsvanguard.uk](http://www.enhertsvanguard.uk)

## GP surgeries take on 100 Day Challenge

Health and social care professionals, the voluntary sector and patients came together this week to begin a ‘100 Day Challenge’ which aims to improve care and support for older people.

Two of our GP surgeries - Park Lane in Broxbourne and Wallace House in Hertford have signed up to the challenge and are working with [Nesta](#) - an innovation foundation - and NHS England on ways to improve care for frail people over 65 who have anxiety. Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust – which provides mental health and learning disability services – and Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust – which provides community services, are also involved in the challenge.

By the end of the 100 days it is hoped that all partners will be working differently to deliver more co-ordinated care. We’ll update you with progress from the 100 Day Challenge in future bulletins.