



Reform and Modernisation Proposals Public Information Leaflet – Supporting Consultation

Background

The Trust has set out a number of service modernisation proposals that are currently being consulted on. These proposals are aimed at providing modern, safe services into the future and also make best use of the resources allocated. The Trust is required to make savings of £44 million to be achieved over a three-year period. These savings will be reinvested into front line services through the Department of Health and Social Services. A large part of these savings, £23 million, are to be achieved through reduced management and administrative costs and general efficiency (such as negotiating better prices for drugs or using computer technology instead of printing of all x-ray images).

The proposals aim to ensure we are using resources to best effect without compromising on the quality or quantity of care provided. This leaflet summarises those proposals and we are now consulting on these. Consultation ends on 6 March 2009 after which the Trust Board will set out its final recommendations and forward these to the Minister for consideration and decision.

Key Service Proposals

Services for Children

- We want to achieve greater stability and permanence for children in care and to do this we propose to replace Princes Gardens childrens home in Larne with salaried foster carers, recruiting foster carers across the area appropriate to the age profile and needs of children and young people, helping them to remain in their local communities, with access to extended family and relatives, schools and friends.
- We propose to add to the ways in which we provide respite care for children. Currently, residential respite care is provided in Cherry Lodge (Randalstown), at Whitehaven (Whitehead) and in conjunction with Praxis at Rainbow Lodge (Ballymena). Cherry Lodge is a small unit (three beds); it is not purpose-built and has serious space and design limitations. Its location restricts access for children and families across the Trust area. We propose to replace the service provided in Cherry Lodge Residential Facility with 12 specialist salaried carers to extend the family-based respite scheme. A Trust support team would be established to complement and enhance the service provided by the salaried foster carers.

Mental Health Services

- We propose to invest in a range of improvements across mental health services. These include the development of a new home treatment service which will reduce the demand for admission to hospital and facilitate the closure of Ward 8 at Whiteabbey Hospital. We also intend to establish a local Personality Disorder Service, reducing reliance on services in Great Britain. We also propose to widen the range of community-based options for dementia patients, which will reduce reliance on the Inver 4 ward in Holywell. A further proposal is the development of community rehabilitation services for mental health patients as an alternative to hospital-based rehabilitation.

Learning Disability Services

- We propose to extend respite care provision by extending home-based support and family placements, through the 'Host Carer' service. This approach would be in keeping with supporting people with a disability to enjoy full lives in their own communities. It will increase the options and flexibility of respite services for adults with a learning disability reducing reliance on bed-based services.

- We are proposing to extend day care choices for adults with a learning disability through our Day Opportunities Programme. The development of service options would reduce reliance on Broadway Workshop in Newtownabbey, statutory facilities and allow for the replacement of the services currently provided.

Services for Older People

- We propose to replace five of our statutory residential homes with a range of modern supported-living schemes and services. This will mean that people can remain living independently for as long as possible in their own home or within a supported housing scheme, like Barn Halt Cottages in Carrickfergus or The Brook in Coleraine. The new services would be provided in the same locality and no home would be affected until the new accommodation and support were available.
- We also propose to increase the amount of domiciliary care services we get from Independent Sector Providers such as Age Concern or ExtraCare. We would still employ care staff in the Trust but we would also increase the amount provided by independent providers. This would not affect the volume or the quality of services we deliver.

Acute Hospital Services

- We propose to focus acute inpatient and Accident & Emergency services at Antrim and Causeway Hospitals, providing as much as we can locally where it is safe to do so and centralising only where necessary for safety reasons. This would mean changes at Whiteabbey and Mid Ulster Hospitals.
- A&E services at Whiteabbey and Mid Ulster Hospitals would be replaced by high quality Minor Injuries Units. Outpatient services, day surgery, diagnostics and rehabilitation inpatient beds would continue to be provided at both hospitals. This proposal is in keeping with the Developing Better Services (DBS) initiative for hospitals across Northern Ireland.
- We will concentrate acute hospital, emergency medicine and inpatient surgery services on two hospital sites rather than four. This will mean acutely ill patients are admitted to a hospital that has the appropriate skilled staff and support services - such as intensive care and advanced diagnostics - needed to provide the most appropriate, quality treatment and care.

Other Proposals

- We propose to introduce traffic management procedures at Antrim and Causeway Hospitals. Car park charges would be introduced (with exceptions) and the income generated would come back to the Trust for reinvestment.
- The Trust has contracts with a number of independent provider organisations to deliver services, largely in the area of social care. It is proposed to renegotiate these contracts to achieve improved value for money.

Consultation: Opportunities and Responses

Four public meetings are being held in Coleraine, Carrickfergus, Antrim and Cookstown (details in local papers and Trust web site www.northerntrust.hscni.net), meetings about individual proposals are also being held and you can also send you views to the Trust Equality Unit by 6 March 2009. Contact details:

Alison Annett, Head of Equality, Route Complex, 8e Coleraine Road, Ballymoney Co Antrim BT53 6BP
Tel: 028 2766 1377. Fax: 028 2766 1209 Textphone: 028 2766 1377 equality.unit@northerntrust.hscni.net