

Review of children's congenital heart services in England and Wales.

The Panel's views were submitted to the National Specialised Commissioning Team which is leading the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts' Safe and Sustainable review of children's congenital heart services in England and Wales.

The outcome of the consultation will be considered by the JCPCT and they are expected to make a final decision by the end of 2011.

Background

The National Specialised Commissioning Team leads the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts' Safe and Sustainable review of children's congenital heart services in England and Wales. It produced 4 options for the reconfiguration of these services (options A-D). More details can be found here:

http://www.specialisedservices.nhs.uk/library/30/Safe_and_Sustainable_A_New_Vision_for_Childrens_Congenital_Heart_Services_in_England_Consultation_Document_1.pdf

The options for the number and location of hospitals that provide children's heart surgical services in the future are:

Option A

- Freeman Hospital, Newcastle
- Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool
- Glenfield Hospital, Leicester
- Birmingham Children's Hospital
- Bristol Royal Hospital for Children
- 2 centres in London

Option B

- Freeman Hospital, Newcastle
- Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool
- Birmingham Children's Hospital
- Bristol Royal Hospital for Children
- Southampton General Hospital
- 2 centres in London

Option C

- Freeman Hospital, Newcastle
- Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool
- Birmingham Children's Hospital
- Bristol Royal Hospital for Children
- 2 centres in London

Option D

- Leeds General Infirmary
- Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool
- Birmingham Children's Hospital
- Bristol Royal Hospital for Children
- 2 centres in London

A public consultation was then launched.

The HOSP asked the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel to carry out an informal review to gain a good understanding of the issues involved. The subsequent report was considered by the HOSP in March and the Cabinet was asked to write to the NHS Specialist Services to express the Council's support of option B in its Safe Sustainable Review of paediatric cardiac services. The Cabinet decided it was not appropriate for it to consider this and returned the item to the HOSP.

It was agreed that as this is a matter that will affect several areas, the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth) would scrutinise this issue and submit its views to the consultation. However, the Joint HOSC decided that individual HOSCs would look into this and respond to the public consultation separately.

The closing date for the public consultation was 1 July, so the HOSP's comments set out below were submitted to the National Specialised Commissioning Team.

1. Southampton General Hospital was described as an exemplar hospital in training and education, the management of paediatric intensive care and the standards on most of its wards by an independent review of the 11 centres that carry out children's heart surgery which was led by Professor Sir Ian Kennedy. In this review it was ranked the second best performing centre for its quality of outcome, environment, team working, culture and parent involvement.

2. It has the lowest mortality rate in the country for mixed Intensive Care Units.

3. The closure of this surgical centre would mean a loss of facilities and experience. During this review, the Panel has heard that staff do not necessarily transfer to the nearest centre. Its closure would also mean an increase in costs to families from Portsmouth and surrounding areas who would have to travel further to a surgical centre. This would be particularly felt by families in the Channel Islands.

The Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel therefore supports option B in its Safe Sustainable Review of paediatric cardiac services.