

News bulletin for community partners and NHS staff

Issue 3: July/August 2008

Hemel Hempstead – the latest news

20 new **intermediate care beds** opened in Lancaster Ward at Hemel Hempstead Hospital in July and are taking patients from the area who are recovering after an acute hospital stay but are not quite well enough to manage on their own at home. Management of the ward will pass to West Hertfordshire PCT in the Autumn. The beds are in addition to the 24 intermediate care beds at Gossoms End Unit in Berkhamsted.

A new **urgent care centre** will open its doors in Hemel Hempstead on 1 October 2008. It will be located in the same building as A&E and will be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The two services will run in parallel for 6 months.

Patients needn't worry about which service to access - they just come to A&E as they do now and will be seen and treated by the most appropriate service / clinician for their individual condition.

The urgent care centre will be run by Dacorum Urgent Care Partnership (a collaboration between Herts Urgent Care and West Hertfordshire Hospitals Trust).

Running up to the transfer of full A&E services from Hemel Hempstead to Watford in March 2009, a vigorous publicity campaign will get underway to ensure that those people who currently use A&E services at Hemel Hempstead Hospital are aware of the changes and how they will affect them.

At the same time, Hemel Hempstead will become a local general hospital having services such as the urgent care centre, X-ray, scanning, blood tests, outpatient services, intermediate care beds and the new West Herts GP-led health centre.

A new local general hospital
The challenge for the future is to develop more local services in modern, purpose built facilities. West Hertfordshire PCT is leading

the planning and development of a new local hospital which should be ready in approximately 4 years time.

A shortlist of potential sites in Hemel Hempstead, including the current site in Hillfield Road, is being drawn up.

Community representatives and NHS staff have already decided on the list of criteria that should be taken into consideration in assessing the site options. They will also be invited to participate in the non financial option appraisal of potential sites in autumn 2008.

A financial option appraisal will also be carried out before a final decision on the site of the new local general hospital is made by the West Hertfordshire PCT Board later in the year.



An artist's impression
of a new hospital
in Hemel Hempstead

New local general hospital to be built on **QEII** site

In July 2008, the Board of East and North Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust approved the QEII Hospital in Welwyn Garden City as the location for a new local general hospital.



This decision followed a rigorous financial appraisal and is the final stage in the process to select the most suitable and sustainable site for the new development.

In April, local patient and community representatives also chose the QEII as their preferred site based on a number of criteria including accessibility and closeness to other clinical services. Following this event, the PCT examined the QEII site in more detail to assess exactly where the potential development could take place. This work included assessing interim construction costs and liaising with local planners about site issues.

The PCT then compared the costs of redeveloping on the QEII site with the cost of a new building on the Hatfield Business Park (the only other suitable site identified). In financial terms there was very little difference between the two sites but the support of local stakeholders tipped the balance in favour of the QEII site.

New partnership to build local general hospital

A new partnership agreement between the NHS and an experienced private sector developer will help the NHS provide new health care facilities.

Assemble Community Partnership is jointly owned by Guildhouse (the private partner), the Department of Health and the primary care trusts in east and north Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes. It will provide strategic advice and expertise to build the new local general hospital on the QEII site.

The partnership has a life of 25 years during which any of the PCTs may use this resource to procure new health and social care facilities or refurbish existing ones.

For more information about the partnership, please contact Jacqui Bunce, Deputy Programme Director, *Delivering quality health care for Hertfordshire* on jacqui.bunce@herts-pcts.nhs.uk

An example of an NHS facility built by Guildhouse in Swaffham, Norfolk



This bulletin has been produced on behalf of the **Delivering quality health care for Hertfordshire Programme Implementation Board**, made up of Chairs, Chief Executives and senior doctors from East and North Hertfordshire PCT, West Hertfordshire PCT, East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust and West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust and representatives of the East of England Ambulance Service. It will be issued bi-monthly. For further information please contact Hertfordshire Primary Care Trusts on 01707 369701, East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust on 01438 781522 or West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust on 01442 287684.



Improving our maternity services

New state-of-the-art facilities for mums-to-be in east and north Hertfordshire have moved a step closer.

At the end of July, the Boards of the PCT and East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust met separately to approve a £15.45 million business case for the development of new co-located midwife and consultant-led units at the Lister hospital in Stevenage.

The business case has now been submitted to the East of England Strategic Health Authority for approval.

The existing two-storey maternity unit at the Lister will be expanded and the existing maternity and neonatal intensive care facilities will also be refurbished. This will enable the new units to support more than 5,500 births every year and provide space for partners to stay with women who go into early labour. The unit will also have room for expansion in the future if necessary.

The proposed development gives East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust an opportunity to make real improvements to its current maternity services. By bringing together specialist staff onto a single site,

the Trust's most senior doctors and midwives will be available for longer periods every day.

This will improve the care that women and their unborn babies receive, especially for more complicated pregnancies or women who develop unexpected problems during childbirth.

The majority of women who have uncomplicated pregnancies will be able to choose to give birth at home or in the midwife-led unit which will have water birth facilities. For those women who need or wish to have a doctor looking after them during birth, they will have access to the Trust's consultant-led service – which will be located close to the midwife-led unit.

Ante-natal and post-natal care will continue to be provided at local health centres and at both the Lister and QEII hospitals.

Assuming that the business case is approved by the strategic health authority in the autumn, building work is expected to begin on the unit in spring 2009. It should be ready for its first mothers and babies in late 2010.

Surgicentre negotiations enter final phase

Negotiations between the local NHS and Clinicenta, the private sector company leading on the *surgicentre* development at the Lister hospital, are now reaching their final stages. Subject to approval by all the parties involved, the aim is to reach final agreement on the deal by the end of 2008 with a potential opening date of autumn 2010.

The *surgicentre* at the Lister, which is part of the government's independent sector treatment centre programme, would see the majority of patients currently treated on a day case basis at the Lister and QEII hospitals, moving across to this new facility on the Lister hospital site.

Trust staff who work in areas transferring to the *surgicentre* will remain employed by the Trust on their existing NHS terms and conditions.

GP-led health centres

In July, the PCT Boards considered the outcome of public consultation on proposals to establish two GP-led health centres, one in each PCT area on the proposed local general hospital sites in Hemel Hempstead and Welwyn Garden City respectively.

After careful consideration of the responses to the consultation and the view taken by the Health Scrutiny Committee, they decided to proceed with the proposals which are in line with government policy and the health strategy for Hertfordshire.

A number of people who responded to the consultation were under the impression that the new health centres would be polyclinics which would replace existing surgeries. Polyclinics are a London only model which would not work in Hertfordshire. The new health centres are additional to existing GP services and are aimed at improving access to primary health care services.

Results of a recent independent survey testing patients' satisfaction with their GP services in Hertfordshire demonstrated that many patients found it difficult to make an appointment with their GP.

The new health centres will help address these problems. They will offer walk-in or pre-booked appointments from 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and patients can either be registered with them or remain with their current practice and access services at the centres when required.

They will open in Spring 2009 following a comprehensive tendering process to select who should run them. This is well underway. The PCTs received 74 initial expressions of interest and subsequently, 32 pre-qualification questionnaires.

These have now been evaluated by a PCT panel including patient representatives and 23 organisations have been invited to submit full tenders. Of these, there is a mixture of local NHS organisations including GP consortia, NHS organisations outside the county and commercial organisations.

Mount Vernon Cancer Centre review

On 1 September a discussion document on the future of cancer services at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre will be published. The document is the first stage of a review process to deliver world class cancer care for patients in Hertfordshire and surrounding counties served by the centre.

Based in Northwood, the cancer centre provides radiotherapy and chemotherapy services for around 5,000 patients from across Hertfordshire, south Bedfordshire, south Buckinghamshire, east Berkshire and northwest London.

While the overall hospital site is the responsibility of Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust, the cancer centre itself is managed by East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust.

Anne Walker, Chief Executive of the Hertfordshire PCTs and chair of the review's steering group says: "Following the publication of the national cancer reform strategy, the time is now right to look at how radiotherapy and chemotherapy services are provided for Hertfordshire patients. This review aims to help us make the best use of the existing world class services we have at Mount Vernon and to ensure that any radiotherapy or chemotherapy services provided outside the centre in local hospitals are of an equally high standard."

The discussion paper will ask for views on a number of key areas including:

- What capacity is needed for radiotherapy?
- What would be best model for providing cancer care?
- Finding a long term research and academic partner for Mount Vernon

All views gathered from stakeholders including cancer groups and patient support networks during the discussion period will feed into an interim report which will be published towards the end of 2008.

Acute Admissions Unit at Watford

Centralisation of west Hertfordshire's accident and emergency services at Watford will be completed in early March 2009 when the new 120-bed Acute Admissions Unit opens.

Work on the new unit is progressing well and is on target to be handed over to the West Hertfordshire Hospitals Trust at the end of August. The opening of the new unit has been deferred principally due to the need to install an additional power supply to the Watford site and to ensure a smooth and safe transfer of services.