

Background to the Right Treatment, Right place consultation

By William McKee, Chief Executive

We want health and social care in Belfast to be the best. We want our hospitals to provide safe, efficient, high quality care that meets patients' needs – and that's what this document is about.

We're aiming to offer higher standards of care through the reshaping of our services. Any changes we make will only happen after we have listened to everyone's views.

As a new Trust formed in 2007 from six previous Trusts in Belfast, we were always going to look at areas where we were duplicating effort or had an opportunity to work more effectively on behalf of service users. In 2008 in our New Directions consultation document, we opened a conversation on the best way to deliver services in Belfast over the next decade.

The attached document is part of the next steps. Previously four acute Trusts provided acute services in different parts of Belfast and, as a consequence, some services were replicated across two or three of the adult acute sites – Belfast City Hospital, the Royal Hospitals, Mater Hospital and Musgrave Park Hospital, resulting in a duplicated service for patients and fragmentation of staff skills and expertise. In addition, acute paediatric services are currently provided from four different locations across Belfast, with the majority of services based in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) and with some services in the Royal Eyes & ENT building, in the Belfast City Hospital and in Musgrave Park Hospital.

Following our New Directions consultation, there was general support for the proposed focus of services on each site, with:

- Belfast City Hospital as the centre for cancer, renal and a range of general acute hospital services, with an increased focus on elective services and chronic conditions management;
- The Royal Hospitals as the centre for major trauma services, including a heart centre, with an increased focus on emergency services;
- The Mater Hospital as the centre for ophthalmology services and general acute hospital services and
- Musgrave Park Hospital as the centre of specialist rehabilitation services.

In this document we look in more detail at how a range of acute services are delivered and where they can best be delivered in the future.

This document outlines, in summary, the impact of the nine specialty proposals on the five acute hospitals which are the Royal Hospitals, including the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, Belfast City Hospital, the Mater Hospital and Musgrave Park Hospital.

The specialties are:

- General Surgery
- Vascular Surgery
- Gynaecology
- Urology
- ENT
- Ophthalmology
- Adult Rheumatology and Dermatology
- Cardiology

Each of the specialty teams has outlined their proposal in individual Excellence and Choice consultation document.

In addition, the Trust is proposing that a range of Paediatric Specialties (Paediatric ENT, Ophthalmology, Cardiac Surgery, Orthopaedics and Rheumatology) should relocate to the Royal Hospitals to deliver children's acute services in the most appropriate clinical environment.

Outpatient services are not included in this review except for ophthalmology where specialist support for some outpatients is an integral part of the overall service. We will continue to provide outpatient services as locally as possible, including, from our Wellbeing and Treatment Centres which are located throughout Belfast.

This document details how these service proposals would impact on the existing hospitals for patients, families, carers and visitors, clients, as well as the staff who work on and between these sites.

Over the last few years, the Trust has implemented a range of improvements in acute services, for example, by providing a wider range of day surgery services, increasing admission on the day of surgery and providing better communication to patients and their carers regarding their potential date of discharge.

We are confident that, by delivering services in a way that will support their current and future development needs, this will really help service teams deliver on their

objective to be in the top 25% of UK hospitals for quality of service provision and performance.

We want you to consider the proposals detailed in this document, and the individual specialty documents, and between now and 31 October 2010 we are seeking the broadest possible discussion on the way forward for this group of acute hospital services. If there is agreement on the proposals outlined in this document, we would begin the process of planning a phased implementation of the individual service alignments, with the expectation that, if capital funding is provided to support the plan, implementation will be complete by March 2013.

We want to do all of this to ensure patients get the best treatment possible, by the right person, in the right place, at the right time.

First, we want to listen to you. Please take the time to read this document and let us know your views on the proposals. We remain committed to making improvements and delivering the type of service you expect. Help us to get it right.