

Briefing on the future of children's congenital heart services

6 July 2012

Background

At a meeting in public on 4 July the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts on behalf of all PCTs in England agreed the future configuration of children's congenital heart services.

This decision follows the comprehensive *Safe and Sustainable* clinically-led review of services and one of the largest consultations in NHS history.

Summary of the decision

Seven children's congenital heart networks will be established across England and Wales: the North; North West and North Wales; the Midlands; South Central; the South West and South Wales; with two networks serving London, East Anglia and the South East.

Before reaching its decision, the Joint Committee considered 12 viable options, including several options with surgical centres in Leeds, Southampton, Leicester and three centres in London.

The JCPCT decided the following configuration for Congenital Heart Networks:

The North

- Specialist Surgical Centre: Freeman Hospital, Newcastle
- Potential Children's Cardiology Centre: Leeds General Infirmary

The North West and North Wales

- Specialist Surgical Centre: Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool
- Existing Children's Cardiology Centre at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital

The Midlands

- Specialist Surgical Centre: Birmingham Children's Hospital
- Potential Children's Cardiology Centre: Glenfield Hospital, Leicester

London, East Anglia and the South East

- Specialist Surgical Centres: Great Ormond Street Hospital and Evelina Children's Hospital
- Potential Children's Cardiology Centre: Royal Brompton Hospital

The South West

- Specialist Surgical Centre: Bristol Royal Hospital for Children
- Existing Children's Cardiology Centre at University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff

South Central

- Specialist Surgical Centre: Southampton General Hospital
- Potential Children's Cardiology Centre: John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford

Key benefits

- Develop networks of care to make sure services for children are more joined up and meet new national quality standards
- Expansion of surgical services in fewer larger centres
- Expanded outreach services so children can receive their ongoing care, including check-ups and appointments, closer to home
- An increase in the number of children's specialist cardiac nurses and paediatricians with expertise in cardiology so that all children, no matter where they live, have access to consistent and high quality expert care.

What happens next?

Change will not happen overnight – it will be gradual and carefully planned by the NHS. The NHS will work closely with staff and families to develop detailed plans to manage the transition process to ensure congenital heart networks across England are in place by 2014.

Change will be driven locally though national coordination will remain important in the immediate term. NHS commissioners will be responsible for overseeing the process of implementation to ensure consistent, coherent and legally robust implementation strategies across the country. NHS commissioners will be advised by an expert Implementation Advisory Group comprising representatives of the professional associations and national charities. It will be chaired by Professor Deirdre Kelly, a professor of Paediatric Hepatology at Birmingham Children's Hospital and a Commissioner on the Care Quality Commission.

Change will be delivered by regional Congenital Heart Network Boards which will comprise members from a range of NHS and external organisations across each network and will include parent and patient representation and NHS commissioners.

It will be crucial for NHS commissioners and the professional associations to support the NHS Trusts and NHS staff during the transition process, and clear communication will be needed with parents and the public throughout the process of implementation.

Further information

For the latest information please go to

www.specialisedservices.nhs.uk/safeandsustainable

Or contact the *Safe and Sustainable* communications team on 020 7025 7520 or email nhsspecialisedservices@grayling.com