



UPDATE FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON CONSULTATION ON LEARNING DISABILITY RESPITE CARE

As the Committee is aware the Trust is consulting on the eligibility for and process of assessment and allocation of respite care in Cheshire and on the proposal to close the Primrose Avenue unit and operate an improved single service for central Cheshire at Crook Lane, Winsford. The proposed closure of Primrose Avenue is undertaken on behalf of Cheshire PCT's and Social Services Commissioners.

It was reported in December 2009 that the Task and Finish Group had consulted on and completed their recommendations for eligibility criteria and assessment and allocation of health respite. The new criteria and process had then been used to conduct a preliminary assessment of current service needs to inform whether the closure of Primrose Avenue allows sufficient capacity for future needs.
(The outcome indicated low levels of specialist health need in current service user group (6 to 8 people of 61 requiring specialist in-patient respite)).

This information was reported to the December 2009 Trust Board where the Trust confirmed their view that the low indication of need did not suggest that there would be a future shortfall of health provision if Primrose Avenue closed and that the closure of Primrose Avenue was still recommended by the Trust. This position has now been communicated to consultees and a further 4 weeks allowed for any remaining comments before closure of the consultation (ending 20th January 2010). Final comments will then be incorporated into the final consultation report and be taken to the Cheshire Joint Executive Commissioning Group in February 2010 and also back to the February Trust Board.

The report will include options and recommendations, including any implications for current service users, hence the position on handling any changes is as yet unconfirmed. However, the Trust has already indicated that there is sufficient capacity at Crook Lane to meet the current level of allocation from both units. If the decision to close Primrose Avenue is then confirmed, one option that will be presented is for the new criteria to be first applied to new referrals, not displacing current service users and allowing for a transitional plan to be agreed with commissioners. It is anticipated that Social Services will wish to explore alternatives with service users and families through the community care assessment and review process taking particular account of the opportunities afforded through the 'personalisation' of care and individual budgets. Joint Commissioners have stated their intention to consider the outcome of the consultation to further inform their wider commissioning strategy for respite care/ short breaks for adults with learning disabilities. Implications for existing service users and their families and the impact of any shift from health to social care provision could therefore be managed in a planned and coordinated fashion.

As part of the consultation the Trust has held group and individual discussions with the Primrose Avenue families to consider all potential impacts of moving for themselves and their relative. The families have emphasised careful planning to transfer individual care arrangements and the importance of continuity of staff. Changes in transport

arrangements to allow continued attendance at day services have been considered by Cheshire East Council and are deliverable with some increased costs.

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Clinical Services Manager, Jan 2010