

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **MENTAL HEALTH INPATIENT PROPOSALS PASS THE GOVERNMENT'S TEST**

Proposals to reorganise mental health inpatient services in Lancashire have met the Government's four new tests on service change.

The proposals, which came about after an extensive public consultation in 2006, were reviewed to make sure they demonstrate:

- support from GP commissioners;
- strengthened public and patient engagement;
- clarity on the clinical evidence base; and
- consistency with patient choice.

NHS North West, the strategic health authority, has confirmed that it is assured that the proposals pass all four tests.

While this process was ongoing, NHS North West published an independent review from the National Clinical Advisory Team (NCAT), which said that the proposals were "in line with good clinical practice". NCAT provides a pool of external independent clinical experts to support, advise and guide the local NHS on reconfiguration proposals to ensure safe, effective and accessible services for patients.

The proposed changes to mental health services include reducing the number of inpatient facilities to establish a smaller number of new purpose-built inpatient sites. This was based on evidence that too many people were going into hospital and staying there because there were not enough suitable alternatives in their communities. The care many people with mental health problems need can be provided very effectively in communities rather than hospital. The consultation proposed that there should be more options and choices in the community for support and treatment when people have mental health crises in their lives. Not only do many patients prefer to receive support in a community setting, where appropriate, but they have better mental health outcomes when they are supported by services delivered outside of hospital.

The NCAT review recommended that less mental health inpatient beds were required across Lancashire than the 2006 consultation suggested. A 'technical appraisal group' – which includes GPs and service users and carers – is now assessing the evidence to

decide what the future arrangement of inpatient services should be. Their report is due for consideration by the PCT boards later in the spring.

Debbie Nixon, strategic director for mental health for all five Lancashire primary care trusts, said: "There has been a significant investment in community mental health services across Lancashire in recent years. As a result of this, more and more people for whom going to hospital was once the only option are able to be treated effectively in their own homes. This is great news for patients, and, as a consequence demand for inpatient care has fallen. Our detailed analysis indicates that we may need less inpatient beds in Lancashire than originally thought. It is important to stress that the number of inpatient beds required across Lancashire, and the number or location of sites, has not been decided. We are now seeking the advice of a specially convened Lancashire-wide overview and scrutiny committee about the next steps in terms of further public engagement or consultation."

More information is available on the Lancashire Mental Health and Social Care Partnership website: <http://www.lancashirementalhealth.co.uk/oct2010.htm>.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors**

1. For media queries contact Kate Hurry, NHS Central Lancashire communications team, 01772 644561; [communications@centrallancashire.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@centrallancashire.nhs.uk).
2. The five PCTs in Lancashire are: Blackburn with Darwen NHS Care Plus Trust, NHS Blackpool, NHS Central Lancashire, NHS East Lancashire and NHS North Lancashire.
3. The main provider of inpatient mental health services in Lancashire is Lancashire Care Foundation NHS Trust.
4. The consultation about mental health inpatient services across Lancashire took place in 2006:
  - Over 70,000 consultation documents were distributed to the public, stakeholders and organisations across Lancashire and neighbouring counties (16,250 full consultation documents, 57,000 summary consultation documents).
  - Over 70 public meetings were carried out across Lancashire with 1,216 individuals attending.
  - Over 400 responses were received and independently reviewed. These were received from across the whole of Lancashire.
  - The consultations were led by all of the Lancashire PCTs and were supported by the three local authorities and Lancashire Care Foundation Trust.
  - The response from the public and service users was broadly in favour of the proposals. They said they wanted: more choice over methods of treatment and a range of alternatives; services that treat the whole person, are flexible and delivered according to need; a full range of interventions, including alternatives; inpatient mental health services which create a network of specialised areas catering for people who are particularly vulnerable.