

Item 7: Children Cancer Services – Principal Treatment Centre

By: Kay Goldsmith, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 29 February 2024

Subject: Specialist Children's Cancer Services

Summary: This report invites the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive an update on the Children's Cancer Services proposals following the public consultation. HOSC has determined the changes do not constitute a substantial variation of service for the residents of Kent.

1) Introduction

- a) NHS England is responsible for commissioning specialist services, including children's cancer services for those aged 0-15 years. Care is provided from one of 19 Principal Treatment Centres (PTC) across the UK.
- b) In London and the South East (Kent, Medway, Surrey, Sussex, south east and south west London) a joint PTC is provided by The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust and St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The PTC receives around 400 referrals per year, 107 of which were from Kent and Medway (in 2019/20).
- c) A new national service specification was published in November 2021 and requires PTCs to be delivered on a site with a Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICUs). The Royal Marsden Hospital (Sutton Site) does not have a PICU, and their Trust decided to withdraw from the contract. Therefore, NHS England had to undertake an options appraisal on a shortlist of possible sites for a new service that complies with the specification.

2) Previous visits to HOSC

- a) HOSC received a paper at their meeting 31 January 2023 setting out the proposals for change and being informed the shortlisted options were St George's University Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' at Evelina Children's Hospital. Following discussion, Members agreed that the proposals did not constitute a substantial variation of service.
- b) Key discussion points at the meeting were:
 - i) Centralisation of care on a single site would lead to better care, compliance with the standards, fewer treatment transfers and improved development opportunities for staff.
 - ii) Current treatment required travel to London, as would the new service.
 - iii) Shared care units allowed patients to access some elements of their care closer to home.

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- iv) Charities were represented on the stakeholder group.
- v) Members raised concerns about travel and accessibility and suggested the commissioner approach Transport for London to see whether there was scope for patients to be exempt from charges.
- b) The Chair summarised the discussion, highlighting that service provision was expected to be the same albeit from a different site, still in London. Just over 100 children per year would be affected, and the re-location would result in less transfers between multiple sites. Some engagement had commenced, and more was due to take place. For those reasons he proposed the change was not substantial but invited NHS England back to present the results of the consultation.
- c) A public consultation ran from Tuesday 26th September to Monday 18th December 2023. HOSC members were kept informed via email updates. A decision is expected to be taken in spring 2024.
- d) A representative from NHSE has been invited to present an update on the proposals for children's cancer services Principal Treatment Centre following the conclusion of a public consultation.

3) Recommendation

RECOMMENDED that the Committee note the report.

Background Documents

Kent County Council (2023), Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (31/01/2023)
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=9051&Ver=4>

NHS England (2023) Proposals for the future location of very specialist cancer treatment services for children living in south London and much of south east England, <https://www.transformationpartners.nhs.uk/childrenscancercentre/>

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