

Petition regarding transfer of the Gynaecological Surgical Cancer unit

1. Introduction

- 1.1** A petition was received on the 9 September 2010 from former patients of Derriford Hospital's gynaecological surgical cancer unit.
- 1.2** The petition requests that the Derriford Hospital gynaecological surgical cancer care unit should remain in Plymouth and not be transferred to Treliske Hospital in Truro. The petitioners highlight that the gynaecological cancer surgery outcomes achieved at Derriford Hospital are above the national average and the transfer of services would increase travel for patients in Plymouth, causing additional stress to local women diagnosed with rare gynaecological cancers.
- 1.3** Plymouth City Council has a duty to respond to petitions as outlined in statutory guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government. Details of the Council's petition policy can be found at www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/newsandviews/petitions.
- 1.4** Section 14(2)(b)(ii) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 requires top tier authorities to respond to petitions which relate to an improvement in the economic, social or environmental well-being of the authority's area to which any of its partner authorities could contribute. This means that these local authorities must deal with petitions which relate to the functions, including petitions which relate to the functions, including petitions on matters which are sub regional and cross authority.
- 1.5** As the petition regarding the transfer of gynaecological cancer services received above the requisite 2,500 signatories, the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel activated a provisional meeting. Representatives of NHS Plymouth Teaching Primary Care Trust have been invited to attend and respond to the petition.

2. Scrutiny of Service Reconfiguration

- 2.1** At the meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the 27 January 2010, the panel considered service improvement proposals to centralise gynaecological cancer surgery.
- 2.2** The Panel considered the rationale for centralisation of gynaecological cancer surgery, the independent clinical review with its recommendation for the creation of a second specialist gynaecological cancer surgery centre for the peninsula and the engagement plan for

people who might be affected by the creation of the proposed second centre.

- 2.3** Members welcomed the principle of developing centres of excellence but recognised that patients had other outcomes to consider such as emotional and financial wellbeing. Given that Plymouth was a city with pockets of deprivation, the panel sought assurances that the needs of patients having to travel would be met and supported, along with those of their families. The panel made the following recommendations which were forwarded to NHS Plymouth Teaching Primary Care Trust.

Recommended that the findings of the independent clinical review could not be supported because the report fails to provide the assurances the panel would need in respect of -

- (1) evidence to demonstrate that a second centre at Truro would make a significant difference to clinical outcomes for patients from Plymouth;
- (2) addressing the issue of individual choice for women over where their surgery should take place.

(Minute Number 54 Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel (1, 2) 21/01/10)

3. Progress

- 3.1** Following the recommendations being provided to NHS Plymouth, the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel received information that any feedback on recommendations made to the panel would be dependent on the outcomes of the independent reconfiguration panel review of oesophago-gastric cancer surgery.
- 3.2** The review was completed in July 2010 and resulted in a change of emphasis on service reconfiguration. The Peninsula Cancer Network approved a new approach for improving services for patients across the Peninsula in September 2010 and has provided a report for the Panel's meeting of the 13 October 2010 in response to the petition.