

HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
18 JANUARY 2018
INPATIENT DETOXIFICATION SERVICES AT THE WOODLANDS UNIT
REPORT OF HEAD OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider proposals for the future of inpatient detoxification services for City residents.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a) decide whether it considers the proposal for future provision of inpatient detoxification services to be a 'substantial variation of services' for Nottingham residents;
- b) consider the information available regarding the proposal for future provision of inpatient detoxification services for Nottingham residents; and
- c) either provide comments and/or recommendations, or decide to seek further information/ have further discussions before submitting comments and/or recommendations on the proposal.

3 Background information

- 3.1 The Woodlands Unit is run by Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and located on the Highbury Hospital site. It provides short stay inpatient detoxification services for people with drug or alcohol dependence.
- 3.2 In November 2017 the Committee heard from Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust that the costs of providing inpatient services at The Woodlands exceed the income that the Trust receives for the services provided there and it cannot continue to run the current service model within available resources. Therefore it was undertaking a review which included consultation on potentially closing The Woodlands and exploring options for a more financially sustainable service model.
- 3.3 The service is commissioned by Nottingham City Council and representatives told the Committee that the Unit was an important and successful part of the pathway for citizens who are unable to safely detox in the community. This view was supported by Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust's Consultant Addiction Psychiatrist who commented

that The Woodlands is an important, highly specialised service and if it closed there would be significant implications for other services, for example the Emergency Department.

- 3.4 The Committee also received representations from Double Impact and the Local Medical Committee both stating the importance of retaining the The Woodlands and the detrimental impact to service users and the wider health care system if the facility was lost.
- 3.5 Based on the evidence available to it at that time, the Committee concluded that closure of The Woodlands was not desirable and asked the provider and commissioner to work together to explore ways of maintaining inpatient detoxification services at The Woodlands Unit, or, if this is not possible, to develop a proposal for continued access to inpatient detoxification services by Nottingham residents. The Committee was advised that Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Board intended to make a decision regarding The Woodlands at its meeting in January 2018. Therefore the Committee asked commissioners and providers to come back to the Committee with a proposal for future commissioning and provision of inpatient detoxification services before the Trust Board takes its decision.

3.6 Role of this Committee in relation to substantial developments or variations to services

Commissioners and providers of NHS and public health funded services are required to consult with the relevant local authority health scrutiny committee on proposals for a substantial development or variation of the health service in the area of that local authority. In guidance on planning and delivering service changes, NHS England recognises the importance of this role, stating “health scrutiny is a mechanism for ensuring the health and care system is genuinely accountable to patients and the public, and it brings local democratic legitimacy for service changes” (NHS England 2013). Regulations do not define ‘substantial development’ or ‘substantial variation’ but a key feature is that there is a major impact(s) experienced by service users, carers and/or the public. The Committee’s role is to determine whether it considers the proposal to be in the interests of local health services. It will need to consider:

- whether, as a statutory body, the relevant overview and scrutiny committee has been properly consulted within the consultation process;
- whether, in developing the proposal for service changes, the health body concerned has taken into account the public interest through appropriate patient and public involvement and consultation; and
- whether the proposal for change is in the interests of the local health service.

Following consultation, the Health Scrutiny Committee can make comments on the proposals. The Committee and the relevant health body should work together to try and resolve any concerns locally if at all possible. Ultimately, if this is not possible and the Committee concludes

that consultation was not adequate or if it believes the proposals are not in the best interests of local health services then it can refer the decision to the Secretary of State for Health. This referral must be accompanied by an explanation of all steps taken locally to try and reach agreement in relation to the proposals.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Paper from Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust 'Review of Inpatient Detoxification Services at The Woodlands'
- 4.2 Paper from Nottingham City Council 'Inpatient Detoxification Services at The Woodlands'

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 Reports to, and minutes of the meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23 November 2017

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

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