

11 April 2011

The public meetings are over, but the consultation process goes on

Seven public meetings have now been held as part of the formal public consultation process around plans to improve NHS services in West Sussex, but the listening goes on.

Senior NHS representatives have now hosted public meetings in Shoreham (twice), Bognor Regis, Chichester, Littlehampton, Worthing and Southwick, but there are still more than four weeks before the process comes to an end.

The proposed changes being debated, called “Service Redesign for Quality in West Sussex – Our proposals for better care”, are specifically designed to provide improved inpatient orthopaedic, elderly care and eye services at St Richard’s, Worthing and Southlands hospitals, and better community services.

At the public meetings clinical staff have presented the case for how they believe they can make hospital and community care in the south coast area safer, and better for patients and their carers. More than 250 people have turned up to listen to the case for change, and to have their say.

But the end of the public meetings does not mean that the consultation process has finished. Before the formal end of the process at noon on 29 April, senior health service clinicians and managers continue to be available to provide personal briefings and presentations to any interested group wanting to know more about the plans, or seeking to give feedback.

All of the other normal ways that people can give their feedback will remain in operation until 12.00 noon on Friday 29 April 2011. Up until this time people can continue to submit their views in writing, by email, or via an online feedback form.

The ambition of the clinicians behind the plans is to secure major improvements for patients. Under the plans, major orthopaedic operations will take place close to critical care facilities, ophthalmology services will be provided in new locations in state-of-the-art facilities, and elderly care will be in one place, ending the need for patients to be transferred between sites. There will also be investment into community services, including extra support from GPs and other medical staff to care for people in their own home, or near to their home.

Specifically, the proposals include:

- Relocating inpatient orthopaedics from Southlands to Worthing Hospital
- Relocating inpatient elderly care from Southlands to Worthing Hospital
- Providing an extra 60 beds at Worthing Hospital
- Building two new 'laminar flow' operating theatres for orthopaedic surgery at Worthing Hospital
- Developing Southlands Hospital as a centre for outpatients, diagnostics and day surgery
- Relocating ophthalmology services from Worthing Hospital to Southlands and St Richard's Hospitals
- Investing to provide new services and extra beds in the community, especially "step down" beds for people who have had a long stay in hospital

Dr Phillip Barnes, medical director at Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "The public meetings have been lively, and not always easy for those of us sitting on the platform, but they have been extremely useful in showing us where people have concerns, and where we might need to do more to address these concerns.

"For us the process is not over. We still want to hear from people who can help us to improve our plans still further - face-to-face briefings can be a really constructive way of getting feedback, and having a genuinely two-way discussion about how we can provide the best possible services for people across the south coast. I would urge anyone with a stake in this process to log on to our website, learn about our plans, and get in touch if they want to know more."

The formal public consultation process began on 7 February and will run until noon on 29 April. To find out more, to request a copy of the consultation document including the feedback form, or to make any comments, you can:

- Visit www.westernsussexhospitals.nhs.uk
- Call 01903 285222 ext 4038
- Email consultationfeedback@wsht.nhs.uk

To request a briefing or presentation about the plans on behalf of a group, email consultationfeedback@wsht.nhs.uk

Ends

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