

15 DECEMBER 2011

CCP seeks changes to Barts and The London merger to protect patients

Patients at Newham Hospital risk losing out if the proposed merger of Barts and The London NHS Trust, Newham University Hospital NHS Trust and Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust goes ahead as planned, the Cooperation and Competition Panel (CCP) has concluded following its review of the deal.

In its report today, the CCP has concluded that the current proposals need modifying to ensure there is no deterioration in quality in the provision of routine elective care and routine non-elective care provided from Newham hospital. After extensive discussion with the parties and other affected healthcare providers in the area, as well as an assessment from the CCP's own expert clinical group, the CCP has also stated that any benefits from the deal do not outweigh the potential drawbacks for patients. The CCP will now ask for views on various options it thinks might provide adequate safeguards.

CCP Director, Catherine Davies commented:

'Patients in North East London deserve the benefits that come from having choice and a range of providers. These proposals will reduce patients' choice of providers so we need to work out how to ensure quality does not deteriorate as a result.

"Patients currently using Newham for routine elective services tend to view Barts and The London and Whipps Cross Hospitals as their preferred alternatives but under this merger they would in effect become one provider, removing that choice - and the incentive of the hospital to improve and innovate to attract those patients. Similarly, by becoming part of the same Trust, Newham Hospital would have less cause to maintain and improve its routine non-elective services. At present they need to ensure that such services continue to be commissioned but if they lost them in future they would simply go to another part of the Trust.

"We know there are some difficult challenges facing healthcare services in north-east London but these proposals don't necessarily provide the best solution. As well as the reduction in current choice, having one very large provider in north-east London with revenues of £1.1 billion also risks stifling the development of alternative services and providers in future. It is important that the benefits of choice and competition should continue to be made available to patients in north-east London so that they can access the best possible healthcare. That's why we are asking for views on a number of amendments to the current proposals which we will consider before we finalise our advice to the Secretary of State for Health."

The CCP is now seeking views from interested parties on appropriate modifications to the current proposals. Following consideration of any submissions, the CCP will decide which modifications to recommend to the Secretary of State for Health. A statement of possible remedies is available on the

CCP's website at www.ccp-panel.org.uk. Interested parties are invited to submit written observations on suitable remedies by close of business on 6 January 2012 to cases@ccpanel.gsi.gov.uk. The CCP will finalise its recommendations to the Secretary of State for Health in January 2012.

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NOTES

1. More information on this case can be found on the CCP's website at:
http://www.ccp-panel.org.uk/cases/Merger_of_Barts_and_The_London_NHS_Trust_Newham_University_Hospital_NHS_Trust_and_Whipps_Cross_University_Hospital_NHS_Trust.html
2. The *Principles and Rules for Cooperation and Competition* form the basis of the Department of Health's policy of managing cooperation and competition in the NHS in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. The Principles and Rules aim to ensure the NHS comprises providers and commissioners who deliver the needs of their patients and populations. The role of the CCP is to advise the Secretary of State for Health and Monitor, the independent regulator of Foundation Trusts, on the application of the Principles and Rules.
3. The CCP is supported by a Clinical Reference Group (CRG), chaired by CCP Panel Member, Professor Dame Janet Husband. The CRG provides expert clinical advice on issues under consideration by the CCP and contributes to the CCP's analysis of how cooperation, patient choice and competition can be effective in improving services for NHS patients and delivering value for taxpayers.
4. For inquiries about the Cooperation and Competition Panel contact Rory Taylor, Media Advisor at media@ccpanel.gsi.gov.uk or 07554 459 507.