

Agenda Item No 8

Dudley Health Scrutiny Committee – 16th July 2013

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust
Maternity Update

1.0 Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the Trust's progress to manage maternity demand.

2.0 Background

As per previous papers which laid out the requirement to restrict our maternity bookings to ensure we continue to provide safe, effective care for women and their babies.

3.0 Update

- 3.1 Following discussions with the Black Country Commissioning Cluster, restrictions were placed upon bookings from a specified number of GP practices in Sandwell which are closer to City Hospital than Russells Hall Hospital (RHH).

The restrictions, implemented in December 2011, have resulted in the desired reduction in births of approximately 100 per month, mostly for Sandwell women. Dudley GP practices were not restricted and no complaints were received from Dudley women. Agreement was reached with local commissioners and stakeholders to continue the cap throughout the financial year of 2013/14 with a midyear review during July/August, date yet to be determined.

A maternity strategy business case was submitted to our Trust Board in October 2012 outlining options ranging from maintaining restrictions on bookings to the expansion of services to accommodate predicted maximum potential activity. As would be expected all proposals in the business case indicate significant financial implications to address maternity activity long term.

In order to meet the choices of women who wish to deliver here, the preferred option outlined in the business case was for the maternity unit to expand into part of a neighbouring ward space, increasing the bed capacity by 12 beds. The business case was fully supported by The Dudley Group Board and immediate investment was made into increased midwife levels.

However, since receiving authorisation to work towards expansion of the maternity unit, the introduction of a Maternity Tariff during April 2013 has resulted in a significant drop of income to maternity services which necessitate us to review the financial viability of expanding maternity services at Russells Hall Hospital.

Data is being collated in an attempt to predict the likely impact of releasing part or all of the booking restriction both clinically and financially. Results of this analysis and recommended options will be shared with The Dudley Group Board by autumn 2013 and will inform further discussions with commissioners on the management of maternity demand in Dudley.

4.0 Guidelines

4.1 Safer Childbirth guidelines

5.0 Equality Impact

5.1 Once set the Maternity Strategy will be clear and will apply equally. An Equality Impact Assessment is being carried out.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 For information

6.2 Reassurance that we are working with stakeholders to provide the safest possible care for Dudley women.

6.3 Reassurance that current pressures have not impacted on service quality

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