



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Health)

Date: 21 December 2010

Subject: Children's Cardiac Surgery Services – National Review

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

1.1.1 Seek the Board's view on the likely significance of the proposals / recommendations arising from the national review of Children's Cardiac Surgery Services; and,

1.1.2 Seek the Board's nomination(s) for representatives to serve on a Joint Regional Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as appropriate.

2.0 Background

2.1 As part of the Safe and Sustainable review programme, members of the Scrutiny Board (Health) were formally made aware of the review of Children's Cardiac Surgery Services across England in September 2009. Since that time, the Board has received a number of updates outlining progress of the review and key milestones.

2.2 Previously, the Board has been advised that at the outset of the review, 11 centres across England were providing Children's Cardiac Surgery Services, with around 3,800 procedures being undertaken each year. Throughout the review process, the Board has been reminded that one of the issues being considered centred around a higher number of surgical procedures being carried out in larger, but a smaller number of centres.

2.3 Currently, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is the only provider of such surgical services in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

2.4 The last update provided to the Board (November 2010) advised that there had been a delay in the review process, with proposals / recommendations arising from the review expected to be published in January 2011. This will be followed by a 3-month period of public consultation.

3.0 Health Scrutiny and Service Reconfiguration

3.1 Health Scrutiny Powers around service reconfiguration are focused on the impact of any proposed change / development, and the robustness of any associated consultation arrangements.

3.2 The Department of Health Guidance on Health Scrutiny (published in July 2003) provides assistance to Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (HOSCs) by setting out some guiding principles when considering the nature of proposed service changes and/or developments.

3.3 The guidance states that, in considering whether proposals are substantial, consideration should be given to the general impact of any change on patients, carers and the public who use or have the potential to use a service. Specifically, it is suggested that the following should be taken into account:

- **Changes in accessibility of services** – both reductions and increases on a particular site.
- **Impact of proposal on the wider community** – including the economic impact and other issues, such as transport and regeneration.
- **Patients affected** – changes may affect the whole population or a small group (patients accessing a specialised service). If change affects a small group it may still be regarded as substantial, particularly if patients need to continue accessing that service for many years.
- **Methods of service delivery** – altering the way a service is delivered may be a substantial change.

Delegation of health scrutiny function and joint committees

3.4 The regulations governing Health Scrutiny also allow local authorities to delegate their overview and scrutiny functions to another local authority. This can occur where one authority believes that another authority would be better placed to consider a particular local priority, and the latter agrees to exercise the function.

3.5 The regulations also allow two or more local authorities to appoint joint committees to exercise the scrutiny function of those participating authorities, where deemed appropriate.

3.6 Furthermore, the regulations also allows the Secretary of State (for Health) to make directions to local authorities to establish joint committees. Such direction is likely to be made when requiring the establishment of a joint committee to consider (and respond to consultation on) any substantial service variation or development, where those services are provided to areas that span more than one overview and scrutiny committee

3.7 To help HOSCs from across the Yorkshire and Humber region respond to issues associated with such matters, a protocol for Joint Health Scrutiny was drafted and is attached at Appendix 1: At the time of writing this report, all but one authority from across the Yorkshire and Humber region have formally adopted the protocol as a basis for undertaking joint health scrutiny. In Leeds, the protocol was formally adopted in November 2009, replacing the previous protocol established for West Yorkshire authorities.

4.0 Arrangements for regional joint health scrutiny

4.1 As described above, a joint protocol has largely been agreed, which puts in place arrangements to establish a regional joint health scrutiny committee, where/when required. This includes issues associated with the size of a joint committee (determined by the number of participating authorities), establishing the terms of reference and matters relating to chairing and supporting any joint committee. Such matters are clearly identified in the attached protocol.

4.2 Assuming that forming a joint committee is required and/or established, in line with the attached protocol it should be noted that Leeds is likely to take a leading role in supporting and administering the work of a joint committee around Children's Cardiac Surgery Services.

4.3 As such, arrangements are being made to provide a briefing session for all HOSC Chairs (or their nominee) in January 2011. In addition, draft terms of reference are also being prepared in anticipation of a joint committee being established.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 In noting the content of this report, the Board is asked to:

5.1.1 Offer a view on the likely substantive nature of the review proposals/ recommendations; and,

5.1.2 Nominate a maximum of four members to represent the Leeds Health Scrutiny Board on a regional joint health scrutiny committee.

6.0 Background Documents

- Overview and Scrutiny of Health (Department of Health, July 2003)
- NHS Specialised Services newsletters summer 2009 – winter 2010 (available at www.specialisedservices.nhs.uk/doc/stakeholder-newsletters-cardiac)