

# **A consultation on the future configuration of Emergency Department services in Greater Belfast**

## **SUMMARY**

### **Background**

There are three Emergency Departments in the Greater Belfast area; at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast City Hospital, and Mater Hospital. These hospitals form part of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Edwin Poots, MLA, wants to ensure that Emergency Department services delivered across Greater Belfast are safe and sustainable into the future, where highly-skilled clinical teams can provide a high-quality service for patients. It is not possible to sustain into the future three emergency departments across Greater Belfast.

Minister Poots has asked the Health and Social Care Board, in partnership with Belfast Trust, to engage with the public and representatives of those who use emergency department services including clinicians, public representatives, staff, trade unions, community and voluntary groups, on how best to provide emergency department services within the greater Belfast area.

The Terms of Reference for the consultation approved by the Minister requires the Health and Social Care Board to provide him with a sound basis for a decision on the future make-up of Emergency Department services across this area.

### **Why change the way in which emergency department services are delivered?**

There are three key reasons for making changes in the way Emergency Department services are delivered across Belfast:

1. **The future direction for health and social care services, as outlined in 'Transforming Your Care'** is for urgent care services to be provided as close to people's homes as possible, provided by an integrated team from primary, community and hospital services with an emergency service configuration that is

sustainable and resilient in clinical terms. The report envisaged all hospitals in Belfast Trust as part of a single network of major acute services.

2. **The strategic direction for acute hospitals and service delivery in Belfast, as outlined in Belfast Trust's 'New Directions' document**, focuses on both the development of patient pathways which enable people to access services quickly, without having to attend the Emergency Department, and the development of service profiles for the hospitals in the Belfast Acute Network (BCH, Mater Hospital & RVH);
3. **The need to deliver a safe and sustainable service into the future**, where highly-skilled clinical teams, supported by an effective physical infrastructure and environment, can provide a high quality service for patients.

### **What else is the consultation looking at?**

The consultation document considers options for the future configuration against the following criteria:

- Patient Safety and Quality
- Deliverability and Sustainability
- Effective Use of Resources
- Local Access
- Stakeholder Support \*

\*to be assessed through the consultation

### **Is there a preferred way to deliver safe and sustainable emergency department services into the future in Greater Belfast?**

The consultation document considers a number of options for the future configuration of Emergency Department services.

The preferred and recommended option proposed is that Emergency Department services should be delivered at the Royal Victoria Hospital and the Mater Hospital. Under this option, direct access to the Belfast City Hospital would be available for patients who have been assessed

by their GP as requiring medical assessment or admission to hospital without the need to go via an Emergency Department. These arrangements would be complemented by the enhancement of acute care at home with 24/7 nursing in the community and a range of specialist support to the primary care teams.

### **Have your say**

It is very important that everyone with an interest in these vital services considers the consultation document and makes known their views during the course of the consultation which will run until 10 May 2013.

The consultation document and draft Equality Impact Assessment are available from: [www.hscboard.hscni.net/consult/](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/consult/)

### **Responding to the consultation:**

You can respond to the consultation in one of the following ways:

1. Download the questionnaire from the HSCB website and either email it or post it to addresses below.
2. Request a hard copy of the form and post in back to the address below.
3. Fill in an online form on the dedicated HSCB site [www.hscboard.hscni.net/consult/](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/consult/)

### **Further information is available from:**

Written: Belfast Emergency Department Consultation  
HSCB  
12 – 22 Linenhall Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8BS

Email: EDConsultation@hscni.net

Telephone: 02890 960069

Text Phone: 02890 566755

(Please note Telephone and Text Phone facilities are to be used only to request a posted copy of the consultation documents or to request the documentation in an alternative format)