

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Palliative care services

**Dated: January 2020**

#### Background

In 2018 we commissioned a review of palliative care services across Brent, Central London, West London and Hammersmith & Fulham Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

Penny Hansford who worked as a Director of Nursing at a hospice in South London for many years undertook the review. As part of this process we invited local patients, carers and their families, staff and other local stakeholders to share their experience of these services and the recommendations were published in June. You can read the review online at <https://www.centrallondonccg.nhs.uk/>

#### The independent review

##### 1. What did the review say?

Feedback from staff and patients identified that services could be better co-ordinated and made more accessible; with less than half of patients with an expected death in contact with palliative care services. The challenges identified included:

- inequity of specialist palliative care services in the three boroughs
- inequity of access to the services, with only 48% of people who have an expected death having any contact with community palliative care services; and
- inequity of funding arrangements for the services from the CCGs.

The review made a number of recommendations to address some of the challenges being placed on the services, particularly in terms of specialist staffing:

- Invest more in community services to improve access to a great number of patients.
- Develop a care co-ordination centre – a single point of access for services.
- Standardise services across the four areas
- Specialist staff to undertake greater training for primary and community colleagues.

##### 2. The review stated that it recommends closing the inpatient unit at the Pembridge Palliative Care Centre, does this mean we are in a consultation process?

No, we are not in a consultation process and no decision has been taken on the future design of palliative care services. We are looking at the recommendations from the review across the four CCGs (Central London, West London, Hammersmith & Fulham and Brent) to establish how we address the challenges and significant inequalities highlighted in the report.

We are doing this together with local people to develop a greater understanding of people's experiences of palliative care services. The patient and public engagement events and working group have been looking at the whole model of care to see how we make improvements for the future, focusing on Access, Care and Aftercare and Bereavement.

Should any recommendations be classed as 'substantial' change to the existing palliative care service by our governing bodies (The CCG boards) and associated NHS bodies, these changes will be subject to a public consultation. During the public consultation the impact of any proposed changes on travel time for patients, families and carers will be taken into account with the aim of mitigating that impact.

### **3. I didn't attend one of the recent workshops can I still have my say?**

We will be providing regular updates of progress on the CCG websites so do keep checking. You can also email the project team inbox with any comments or feedback, email [nwlccgs.triborough.palliativecare@nhs.net](mailto:nwlccgs.triborough.palliativecare@nhs.net)

We have published a summary of findings from the three workshops held in 2019. This can be accessed online at <https://www.centrallondonccg.nhs.uk/>.

### **4. What are the timescales for this work?**

Recommendations from the review will be progressed with local people and clinicians in February and March 2020. If any recommendations are classed as 'substantial' change to the existing palliative care service by our governing bodies (The CCG boards) and associated NHS bodies, these changes will be subject to a public consultation that would take place after the engagement phase.

### **5. The review stated that there is under occupancy of beds, but there are reports of people dying alone at home who can't access a bed when it's needed?**

It is not acceptable for anyone to die alone, we are reviewing services to increase access and ensure that this is never the case. We have no waiting list for hospice places and no shortage of hospice beds. If there has been an issue with any patient's referral and the speed of response from the NHS, we would certainly look into it.

The review and our recent engagement events have highlighted issues around equality of access, communication between services and co-ordination of care. It is for these reasons that we are looking to redesign our palliative care services.