

Introduction and background

NHS England, as the body responsible for commissioning specialised congenital heart services, is currently undertaking a national review of congenital heart services for children and adults.

The review considers the whole lifetime pathway of care for people with congenital heart disease (CHD) to achieve:

- the best outcomes for all patients, not just lowest mortality but reduced disability and an improved opportunity for survivors to lead better lives.
- tackling variation so that services across the country consistently meet demanding performance standards and are able to offer resilient 24/7 care
- great patient experience, which includes how information is provided to patients and their families, considerations of access and support for families when they have to be away from home.

A paper providing a summary of progress at one year, including a tentative date for consultation of September 2014, was received and noted by the NHS England Board on 3 July 2014. A copy of that paper can be found here: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/item10h-board-0714.pdf>

Objectives of the review

The objectives of the new CHD review programme are:

- to develop standards to give improved outcomes, minimal variation and improved patient experience for people with congenital heart disease;
- to analyse the demand for specialist inpatient congenital heart disease care, now and in the future;
- to make recommendations about the function, form and capacity of services needed to meet that demand and meet quality standards, taking account of accessibility and health impact;
- to make recommendations on the commissioning and change management approach including an assessment of workforce and training needs;
- to establish a system for the provision of information about the performance of congenital heart disease services to inform the commissioning of these services and patient choice; and
- to improve antenatal and neonatal detection rates.

Current work and next steps

The review team is currently finalising draft national standards and specifications for use in the national commissioning of congenital heart disease services for children and adults (Objective 1). The approach (based on the advice received from a range of people including

patients, public, clinicians and providers at the outset) has been to start from the basis of developing national CHD service standards and specifications. And to this end, the review team has had invaluable input from experts in this work.

In line with NHS England's standard practice, the standards and associated service specifications will be subject to full public consultation, with launch envisaged for September 2014. Following analysis of the responses, NHS England will ask the review's Clinical Advisory Panel to advise on whether, as a result of what has been heard, any of the standards need to be amended, or any extra standards need to be added.

At the same time, the new review team is conducting a fresh assessment of future capacity requirements based on latest data and projections (Objective 2); and taking forward work with partner organisations to improve antenatal detection rates (Objective 6).

The work on standards and specifications together with work on analysis of demand, and that on antenatal and neonatal detection rates will inform discussions in relation to Objectives 3, 4 and 5 above.

Once completed, the review team will be able to make recommendations to the NHS England Board.

It is expected that by the end of the 2014/15 financial year this work will cease to be a dedicated "task and finish" project, and implementation will be mainstreamed as part of NHS England's wider commissioning of specialised services.

Useful information and links

As part of the reviews' commitment to openness and transparency, all meeting agendas, papers and notes are published on the NHS England website and can be found here: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/qual-clin-lead/chd/meetings/>

John Holden, Director of System Policy at NHS England produced a bi-weekly blog post to update stakeholder on progress of the new CHD review – all blog posts can be found here: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/category/publications/blogs/john-holden/>

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