

Next steps to meeting new national standards – Will Huxter

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Welcome to my latest blog about the CHD implementation programme.

I will be using this blog to keep everyone up-to-date with activities during the pre-consultation and consultation period on our proposals for meeting the national standards on CHD, so if you want to receive a blog alert email england.congenitalheart@nhs.net

There has been much written about the proposals that we have made for CHD services and we thought it would be helpful to be clear on some of the facts.

First, no final decisions on CHD services have been made. Rather, following an assessment of current services based on information provided by current providers, NHS England has made a series of proposals about how services should be offered in the future. Final decisions on surgical services will not be made until we have carried out full public consultation.

We are now working with providers and stakeholders to explain and discuss our proposals, and to listen to concerns. This will help us to plan the consultation which we expect to launch later this year.

We expect the NHS England Board to make its decisions, following public consultation, in the first half of next year. But even when decisions have been made, services for patients will not change overnight. If the decision is to make changes like the ones proposed, it will be a steady and carefully planned transition of care and the CHD clinicians that you know will work to ensure care is transferred well. If you have any concerns about this please speak to your cardiologist.

While we are in the pre consultation phase we are responding to invitations from local authority Health and Wellbeing boards and Overview and Scrutiny committees, where we can talk through the proposals and answer any questions and we will continue to do this wherever we are able to. We are also planning to visit hospitals to discuss proposals with teams at the units.

We have updated the [questions and answers page](#) with questions that we have been asked and will continue to add questions and answers. One question we have been asked several times is who was on the panel that carried out the assessment. You can find that answer on our Q&A page, but in brief the assessments were made by a panel of made up of clinicians and patient representatives drawn from the Clinical Reference Group and the Programme of Care Board and commissioners drawn from NHS England's regional and national teams. Professor Kelly, the long serving chair of our clinicians' group was also part of the panel. I chaired it, in my role as the programme's SRO. See the [full list of who was on the panel](#).

The [reports of NHS England's assessment of each CHD centre](#) (both level 1 and level 2) are now also available. These reports give the national panel's assessment of the evidence provided by the units for each

of the requirements examined, which reflect 24 paediatric standards and the matching adult standards. These final reports take into account the comments from each provider organisation on the factual accuracy of its assessment, and so differ from the initial reports shared with providers earlier in the process. Each report details whether the evidence provided shows that the requirement has been met, and then sets out what that provider needs to do to meet those standards that have not yet been met. Each unit is also given a summary rating. An overview of the assessment process, the findings and the ratings for every unit are described in the [overview report of the national panel](#).

We want to reassure patients that published outcomes from all our current providers show that they are safe, but we believe that care can be improved and risks further reduced by ensuring that patients receive their care only from centres that meet the standards. Any changes made to any service will be made safely, and will be carefully managed with patients.

We are also planning for our next CHD Implementation workshop for the clinical and patient & public representatives who have been working on implementing the standards, which will be focusing on transition to adult services, psychological support, engaging young people and how we share best practice.