

# News Release

Friday 24 August 2007

## **HEADLINE: ANNOUNCEMENT OF DECISION ON MAKING IT BETTER AND HEALTHY FUTURES CONSULTATIONS**

NHS North West Chief Executive Mike Farrar today announced that the Secretary of State for Health, Alan Johnson, has fully endorsed the Independent Reconfiguration Panel's (IRP) recommendations with regards to the Making it Better (MIB) and Healthy Futures (HF) consultations.

The IRP believes that changes to maternity, neonatal and paediatric services in Greater Manchester are overdue and they supported the proposals in the preferred option (option A) to provide consultant led services across eight sites. The IRP also supported the development of a clinical network of three neo-natal intensive care units located at St Mary's, the Royal Bolton Hospital and the Royal Oldham Hospitals. The IRP also recommended that the feasibility of midwifery led care in the eight units together with standalone units in Bury, Salford and Trafford should also be explored. The IRP further recommends that community and primary care developments must be successfully introduced before changes to inpatient services are made.

The proposed changes involve additional investment of £60million in capital and £10million in revenue and the improvements in neonatal care will require 79 more neonatal nurses.

Anthony Emmerson, Consultant Neonatologist and lead clinician for the Greater Manchester Neonatal Network said: "The changes will create stronger and safer services for all and we believe they will help to save the lives of up to 30 more babies every year."

The IRP has supported the outcome of the Healthy Futures consultation (Option 1). The IRP agrees with the decision to base A&E services at Oldham, North Manchester and Fairfield hospital in Bury and develop an Urgent Care Centre at Rochdale Infirmary. In addition the IRP agrees with the development of a locality hospital at Rochdale Infirmary. The changes will be supported by £38million investment.

Dr Ruth Jameson, Medical Director for Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust said: "The decision is good news for patients. It means we will be able to move forward and provide patients with centres of excellence giving safe and clinically sustainable services. Currently, many of our services are stretched across four hospitals. Now we will be able to give patient's access to specialist care, 24 hours a day."

For both consultations the IRP makes recommendations in relation to transport and access and that there is a requirement for robust implementation structures and programmes. The IRP also emphasised the role of NHS North West, as the region's Strategic Health Authority, to oversee and monitor the implementation.

Mike Farrar said: "These are local proposals worked up by local clinicians involving thousands of local people. Both consultations signal significant improvements in healthcare and the Strategic Health Authority is committed to ensuring their full and proper implementation."

He added "The Independent Reconfiguration Panel has undertaken a thorough and robust review of the two consultations and backs the original proposals. They also make a number of additional recommendations which we endorse.

"I would like to thank all those involved in both consultations for their hard work so far, particularly those clinicians who have given significant amounts of their time to support and lead the process. Today's decision will ensure that we can provide an improved health service for local people of all ages across Greater Manchester and the surrounding area."

Sir David Henshaw, Chairman, NHS North West said: "The decision announced today signals the start of the next phase in the improvement of children's and maternity services in Greater Manchester and health services in general for people who live in the North East of Greater Manchester. This will lead to the provision of better and safer healthcare for everyone.

"We will now begin the process of implementation. This will take time and investment. For these improvements to take place there will be full and continued involvement of everyone including staff, patients and their carers."

Ends

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1. For a full copy of the IRP report and recommendations please go to [www.irpanel.org.uk](http://www.irpanel.org.uk)
2. For all Healthy Futures media enquiries please contact Maggie Doyle on 0161 655 1461 or 07879 498 574
3. For all Making it Better media enquiries please contact Fiona Smith on 0161 874 5704

### **Further Information**

The Making It Better consultation proposed improvements in children's, maternity and neonatal care across Greater Manchester, High Peak and parts of East Lancashire and the Healthy Futures consultation reconfigures healthcare for the people in the North East of Greater Manchester.

These were two of the largest health consultations ever undertaken in the country and together took into account the views of almost half a million people. Both resulted in proposed changes in healthcare. Salford, Bury and Rochdale Overview and Scrutiny Committees referred the consultations to the former Secretary of State for Health, Patricia Hewitt, who then asked the IRP to undertake reviews.

The reviews were undertaken between March and June 2007 and reports were submitted to the Secretary of State for Health, Alan Johnson.