

SOUTH EAST LONDON JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2024

RECONFIGURATION OF CHILDREN'S CANCER PRINCIPAL TREATMENT CENTRE

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

NHS England is responsible for commissioning specialised services, including children's cancer services for those aged 0 to 15. This includes Principal Treatment Centres (PTCs), providing diagnosis, treatments, and coordination of highly specialised care for children aged 1 to 15 years with cancer. There are 13 PTCs in England.

In 2021, NHS England published a service specification with new requirements for Principal Treatment Centres. It was developed with parents, patients, healthcare professionals and cancer charities. It says Principal Treatment Centres must now be on the same site as a Level 3 children's intensive care unit, children's surgery and several other specialist children's services. Previously this was not a requirement.

NHS England have advised that this is so children with cancer who need intensive care (alongside a range of other services) do not have to move from the very specialist cancer centre for this care. Transfers of very sick children for intensive care add risks and stress. With intensive care teams able to visit children on the ward and see for themselves how they are doing, it is also likely fewer patients will need to be moved to the intensive care unit. A range of other benefits associated with this change are identified by NHS England (London and South East regions) in their [consultation document](#).

The Principal Treatment Centre is currently run across two sites - The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust and St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust respectively. Most cancer care, including chemotherapy, radiotherapy and bone marrow transplants, is at The Royal Marsden's site in Sutton, Surrey. Patients who need cancer surgery, intensive care and some other specialist children's services go to St George's Hospital eight miles away in Tooting. Children also go to other specialist hospitals in London for specific kinds of cancer care.

As a specialist cancer hospital, The Royal Marsden in Sutton where the Principal Treatment Centre is currently located does not have a children's intensive care unit or some of the other required services. The Royal Marsden accepts that the new service specification means the service must move and has supported the consultation.

Two options have been consulted on to relocate the Principal Treatment Centre to these are:

- Evelina London Children's Hospital, which is run by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and is based on the St Thomas' site by Westminster Bridge
- St George's Hospital, which is run by St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and is based in Tooting.

Under both options, conventional radiotherapy services are proposed to move to University College Hospital, in central London¹.

The SEL JHOSC met informally in April 2023 to be notified of the proposals and to determine whether the proposals represented a “substantial variation” it was determined that this was the case for South East London and therefore a formal process of consultation with the JHOSC was triggered.

NHS England has been engaged with the SEL JHOSC on this service change proposal through formal meetings and informal briefings since April 2023. The JHOSC has met formally in July 2023 to consider the proposals and pre-consultation engagement work that had been undertaken.

The public consultation on this matter was launched on the 26th of September 2023 and closed at midnight on the 18th of December 2023.

NHS England (London region) met with the SEL JHOSC Members informally in November 2023 for a mid-point review of the consultation.

NHS England will be talking through a summary of the feedback received through the public consultation at this SEL JHOSC meeting, prior to the JHOSC agreeing and submitting its formal response to the proposals.

2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION AND AGREEMENT

Following this meeting of the Committee, the SEL JHOSC will be required to submit its formal written response to the proposals (including any recommendations) to NHS England prior to a decision being taken by NHS England as to which of the two consulted options it will choose (Indicatively Mid-March).

Following consideration and discussion of the feedback from and outcomes of the Public Consultation the SEL JHOSC will be required to consider and discuss what its formal response to the proposals will be.

Members are asked to consider and agree:

¹ Both options for the future location of the Principal Treatment Centre would provide all the services that must be on the same site as the PTC, including a Level 3 intensive care unit. Neither Evelina London nor St George's would provide all 'readily available' services listed in the national service specification, these include conventional radiotherapy which is proposed to be provided by University College Hospital.

- a. **The Key Points it would like to make within the Committee's formal response**
- b. **Any recommendations it would like to make as part of the Committee's response (including the wording of any recommendations)**

It may be helpful for the Committee to note some of the key themes that it has raised in discussion of this issue to date:

- Travel and parking arrangements
- Workforce concerns
- Local support offer
- The delivery timeline

3. Summary of Legal, Financial and Other Implications

There are no legal, financial and other implications arising from this report.

Local Government Act 1972 – section 100d List of background documents

None.

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