THE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

‘SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE’ - PAEDIATRIC CARDIAC SURGERY

1. INTRODUCTION

Directors will be aware of the outcome of the national review of children’s heart surgery, which was announced by the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts (JCPCT) on 4th July 2012. The outcome saw the approval of configuration ‘Option B’, thereby reducing the number of surgical centres nationally from 11 to 7, continuing surgery in Newcastle but ceasing surgical services in Leeds, Leicester, Oxford and the Royal Brompton, London.

A Judicial Review was launched on behalf of Leeds, suspending the outcome of the reconfiguration. In addition, an Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) review is taking place to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for Health as to whether the JCPCT’s decision was the right one. This paper updates Directors on recent developments.

2. JUDICIAL REVIEW

There is little progress to report on the Judicial Review. NHS England (which is the successor body of the JCPCT) has filed papers to apply for leave to Appeal, but there is no progress whatsoever to advise of in terms of whether or not this right shall be granted.

NHS England launched a statement to say that they would not re-score any of the Trusts apropos the Safe and Sustainable standards at this point, and would focus on the Appeal. Directors will be updated when further information is known.

3. SUSPENSION OF SURGERY AT LEEDS

It has been widely published in the press that Paediatric Cardiac Surgery was suspended at Leeds, the day after the Judicial Review hearing, following concerns about mortality data from the unit. Following a 10 day suspension, surgery has since recommenced. Newcastle has assisted the Department of Health in its enquiries, including the submission, as requested, of a case history dossier.

Newcastle has received several requests for second opinions and transfers of care since the closure and re-opening. These are not currently causing any capacity concerns for the Freeman Hospital.

4. RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

Directors will also note that the Secretary of State (SoS) has asked the Independent Reconfiguration Panel to review the decision made by the JCPCT. This review is intended to take place in parallel to the Judicial Review, and the
report was expected at the end of April 2013 being understood to be now with the SoS, albeit nothing further of substance can be advised of in this regard.

5. RECOMMENDATION

To i) receive the briefing ii) note the fundamental risks that a reassessment poses to Children’s Heart Services across England whilst progress is halted iii) note the inherent delays surrounding disclosure of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel review findings and the timescales now ensuing and iv) receive an update on developments at the meeting.

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