

## **NORTHERN LOCAL COMMISSIONING GROUP**

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the Northern Local Commissioning Group held on Thursday, 19 January 2023 at 2.00pm.

### **PRESENT:**

**Interim Chair:** Cllr C Mallaghan (Local Elected Representative)

**Members:** Mrs A Crawford (Voluntary & Community Representative)  
Dr C Gorman (General Medical Practitioner)  
Ms M Lavery, (Nurse Representative, PHA)  
Mr D Manson (General Dental Practitioner)  
Cllr W McCaughey (Local Elected Representative) *(from 2.30pm)*

**In Attendance:** Ms E Fitzsimmons (Communications, SPPG)  
Mrs B Harkin (Assistant Director, Commissioning Lead) *(left 2.25pm)*  
Mr M Meehan (Commissioner for Health Improvement, PHA)  
Mrs P Smyth (Deputy Commissioning Lead)  
Mrs C Forsythe (Governance and Safety, SPPG)  
Mrs C Cahoon (Governance and Safety, SPPG)  
Ms C Diamond (NHSCT) *(Item SMT57/22)*  
Dr D Morgan (NHSCT) *(Item SMT57/22)*  
Ms S Pullins (NHSCT) *(Item SMT57/22)*

**Apologies:** Dr S Hamilton (General Medical Practitioner)  
Dr M McLister (General Medical Practitioner)

**DNA:** Mrs F Brown (Voluntary & Community Representative)  
Mr S Burns (Pharmacist)  
Ms J Haslett (Social Worker, SPPG)  
Dr U Lernihan (Social Worker, SPPG)  
Dr C McMaster (Public Health Specialist)  
Mrs P McMullan (AHP Representative, PHA)

## **NLCG1/23 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting of Northern LCG. He extended a special welcomed to Caroline Diamond, Dr David Morgan and Suzanne Pullins, NHSCT who had joined the meeting for item NLCG5/23.

**NLCG2/23**

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Members confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest in relation to any of the items of business.

**NLCG3/23**

**MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN LCG MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 were agreed by all who were present at the meeting.

**NLCG4/23**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**NLCG5/23**

**NHSCT CONSULTATION ON MATERNITY SERVICES**

The Chair invited Ms Caroline Diamond and Dr David Morgan NHSCT to share a presentation with Members. Ms Suzanne Pullins, NHSCT also joined the meeting for this item.

By way of background information, Dr Morgan advised that consideration is being given to the long-term future of NHSCT Maternity Services with a planned new-build Women and Children's Unit on the Antrim Hospital site providing high-quality, purpose-built accommodation for maternity, paediatric and other services. This is subject to business case approval and funding availability and is expected to be in service 2027/28.

He advised that in the interim, due to concerns around workforce, safety and sustainability, it has been identified that service reform, in advance of a new build, is required.

Whilst the service has worked hard to sustain maternity services on the Causeway site, it is becoming more and more challenging. Members noted that the current configuration of maternity services in the Northern Trust is a fragile and vulnerable service model which is unsustainable. Dr Morgan summarised the issues and challenges and the need for a more clinically sustainable model of maternity care and to improve standards and outcomes by reducing intervention rates.

Ms Diamond summarised the interim future model options. She outlined the detail along with available information and evidence that supports the development of a model of care and an analysis of possible options for future services.

Ms Diamond advised that consideration has been given to anticipated concerns which may be raised, particularly around distance to travel and the impact on Causeway Hospital.

Ms Pullins advised that as part of the consultation process, the NHSCT is holding listening events to allow the public to hear more about the proposal and for them to receive feedback. The first one was held on 18 January 2023 and had proved to be a valuable source of information sharing and feedback provided. A second event is scheduled to take place on 8 February 2023. Further information in relation to this event can be found on the NHSCT website. Ms Pullins advised that the NHSCT is also willing to meet with individual groups / organisations face to face to discuss the consultation further.

During discussion, NHSCT representatives responded to a number of questions raised. They advised that they are seeing a year-on-year decrease in the birth numbers in the Causeway Coast and Glens area. During COVID-19 maternity services had to be centralised at Antrim Area Hospital and this enabled modelling work to be carried out for the purposes of the consultation which indicates that very low numbers of maternity patients are likely to opt to go to Altnagelvin Hospital rather than Antrim Area Hospital for Maternity Services.

Members noted that additional building works are planned for Antrim Area Hospital to enhance the capacity of maternity services and steps are being taken and measures put in place to alleviate the anticipated additional pressures and to ensure a more streamlined service for patients.

NHSCT representatives reassured Members that discussions have been had with NIAS colleagues and they have confirmed that any obstetric emergency, such as a Baby Born Before Arrival, will be treated as a Category 1 ambulance call.

The Chairman thanked NHSCT representatives for the informative presentation.

**NLCG6/23**

## **COMMISSIONING LEAD UPDATE**

As Mrs Harkin was required to leave the meeting early, Mrs Smyth provided the following update to Members: -

### ICP Future

Members had received a copy letter, dated 22 December 2022, advising that the DoH Policy Framework for ICPs will be stood down at the end of March 2023. This is part of the transition to the new Integrated Care System which is being designed for NI.

### Integrated Care System (ICS) Test

Members were advised that ICS test sites will be implemented over the coming year, commencing in April 2023 in advance of the implementation of the ICS NI model which is planned for implementation in April 2024, subject to legislative provision. The intention is to establish shadow AIPBs across all five HSC trust geographical areas, with initial roll-out commencing in the Southern Area. These test sites will include the ability to establish connections at local and community level; analyse population need; understand the process for agreeing local services; and assessing the governance and accountability of such.

### Whiteabbey Nightingale Enhanced Therapies and Rehab Unit

Members noted that the Whiteabbey Nightingale Enhanced Therapies and Rehabilitation Unit was commissioned by the Minister in November 2020 as part of surge response, to operate as a regional post-COVID stepdown service. Since April 2021 the unit transitioned to a regional fractures / general rehab model.

As a recurrent funding source could not be identified to support the Nightingale Unit, it was therefore identified as unsustainable beyond March 2023. The closure will be carried out in a phased way between January and March 2023 and the Trust has been engaging with staff, Trade Unions and other stakeholders.

Mid and East Antrim Area Partnership (MEAAP)

The first IMPACT Agewell Strategic Ezine of 2023 was shared with Members. This provides a summary of the work of the group and commended the partnership on the achievement in October 2022 when they were awarded “Best Health Creating, Population Health Management Approach” at the 2022 Health Creation Awards.

**NLCG7/23**

**FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS ATTENDED**

There was no feedback from Members.

**NLCG8/23**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next virtual public meeting of the Northern LCG will be held on Thursday, 23 March 2023 at 2.00pm.