

# Stakeholder Brief

Special Edition

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## Transforming community health services

NHS Worcestershire has announced a wide ranging review of its Primary Care Trust Provider Arm in response to recent Department of Health (DoH) guidance that sets out how the organisational form of these functions is expected to change. The review will be undertaken in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including staff, the County Council, local GPs and the other Worcestershire NHS Trusts.

The DoH guidance was issued following the publication in December of the latest NHS Operating Framework – the document that sets out the objectives for the health service for the coming year. It makes it clear that Primary Care Trusts aren't expected to continue as organisations that provide services, and need to focus solely on commissioning, buying and arranging services in the future.

Although there has been a lot of work done in Worcestershire looking into the possibility of setting up a Community Foundation Trust, options such as this are now being discouraged and PCTs are asked to consider integration with existing Acute or Mental Health Trusts, closer working with local GPs or setting up social enterprises run by staff.



Paul Bates, Chief Executive of NHS Worcestershire, announced the start of a project to complete the review after a meeting of stakeholders on 25th January and said:

“The Department of Health has some clear expectations about this work and we have a specific remit that sets out what we can and can't consider. I am determined to make sure the work that we do on this focuses on what's best for patients and is about improving the services themselves as well as offering the best value to the taxpayer.

This project will offer us an opportunity to look in more detail at patient pathways and see where services could be better integrated. It is an opportunity to really increase the momentum of the Transforming Community Services work that we have been progressing and will help us meet our quality and productivity challenge.

In many ways the organisational form and structures are irrelevant as long as we keep the interests of patients in Worcestershire at the forefront of this work. We want to listen to and involve our staff and partners and are confident that we can come up with the right solution for Worcestershire, even in the extremely challenging timescale that we have been set.”

The review will have to draw initial conclusions by the middle of February with a formal proposal of a preferred option from Worcestershire to be submitted before the end of March. If this was approved a period of formal consultation would follow and the plans would be implemented by April 2011. The work will build upon the recent *Transforming Community Services* work that was co-ordinated by Mouchel on behalf of NHS Worcestershire and led to the development of a Commissioning Strategy for Community Services and a business plan for the existing provider arm managed community services.

A Project Team has now been setup that is being independently co-ordinated by Laurence Tennant, a very experienced and retired former NHS Chief Executive. Staffside representatives are on the Project Team, along with local GPs and senior officers from Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership Trust, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust, the PCT Provider arm and NHS Worcestershire.

One of the first tasks that the Project Team has agreed to undertake is to develop a series of proposals from each of the stakeholders that outline options for the future management of the services concerned. Staffside have also been included in this part of the process and will be

developing their views on the most suitable option. A Project Board will then make a formal recommendation to the NHS

Worcestershire Board who will decide on the preferred option at their meeting on 17th March.

Paul Bates added,

“We are lucky to have been able to get Laurence Tennant on board to assist with this work. His background in NHS management, as well as a history of close working with GPs and Local Authorities to develop community services makes him ideally placed to help us find the best solution. I accept that change is never universally welcomed but I do really believe that this is an ideal opportunity to make some substantial changes that can improve services. Whilst we are doing this it is of course business as usual and I’d also add that I don’t envisage huge changes to the vast majority of people’s jobs and roles. I welcome the fact that we have got an opportunity to work closely with stakeholders and promise to keep staff and other stakeholders closely informed as we make progress.”



Further briefings will be issued on a regular basis as this work progresses.

**For more details or to submit any comments for consideration in this process please email [communications@worcestershire.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@worcestershire.nhs.uk)**

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