

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>28 February 2013</b>
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>“Health Care In North Wales is Changing”</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	<b>Councillor R H Wyn Williams</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>	<b>D P Lewis, Corporate Director</b>
<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>Present to the Council main recommendations of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) review of health care arrangements in North Wales with specific implications to Gwynedd and report back on discussions with BCUHB.</b>

### **Introduction**

- 1.0 Background – Between August and October 2012 BCUHB held a consultation on the future of health services following publication of the consultation document “Health Care in North Wales is Changing”.
- 1.1 At a Board meeting of the BCUHB on Friday 18 January 2013 recommendations were presented following consideration of the responses received in the consultation period. In addition to this an Equalities and Impact Assessment was made and the response of the Community Health Council was considered.
- 1.2 In the wake of the announcement a formal notice of motion was received by the Council in its meeting on 24 January 2013 proposing:-
- a) That the Council holds a meeting with the Health Board to discuss the financial implications, expectations on the service and that no changes take place until the discussions have been held.**
- b) That we ask the Community Health Council to refer the matter for consideration by the Health Minister, Lesley Griffiths.**
- 1.3 In response to the above a meeting was held with representatives of the BCUHB on 30 January and attached are notes of that meeting for the attention of the Council.

## **2.0 Main Recommendations relevant to Gwynedd**

2.1 Three significant priorities to develop health care in North Wales were confirmed:-

- a) targeted preventive work
- b) enhanced care in the home
- c) move care from acute hospitals to the community.

It was also confirmed that they would be working towards general principles of:-

- i) consistent care available in fewer hospitals,
- ii) that the same care services should be available within a 40 minute car journey to as many as possible,
- iii) strengthen services in 'hub' hospitals.

2.2 In Gwynedd it was confirmed that Ysbyty Gwynedd, Alltwn Hospital and Dolgellau General Hospital would be 'hub' hospitals.

2.3 'Home Enhanced Care' would be developed across North Wales and introduced a step at a time but in each area in 2013/14.

2.5 It was confirmed that x-ray services would close in Tywyn and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Two changes to the original proposal in relation to x-ray services was noted, i.e. number of sessions in Eryri Hospital and Bryn Beryl Hospital would be reduced (from 9 to 3 in Eryri and from 3 to 2 in Bryn Beryl) but with the intention to commission services in Machynlleth for South Gwynedd residents.

2.6 The development of Blaenau Ffestiniog as a centre for better community services was confirmed, expand primary services, close minor injuries and x-ray but with GP's providing minor injuries service and closure of in-patients beds with the care being provided at Alltwn Hospital.

2.7 In relation to Older People Mental Health (including dementia care) the intention to strengthen community services and liaison was confirmed as was the permanent closure of Uned Meirion (Dolgellau) and Hafan Ward Bryn Beryl).

- 2.8 The proposal to commission intensive care services for young babies from Arrow Park was confirmed.
- 2.9 The intention to centralize complex and arterial services on one acute hospital site but moving to two sites at first was confirmed.

### **3.0 Relevant considerations**

- 3.1 The main effect of the decisions will be felt in Blaenau Ffestiniog with the closure of in-patient beds, minor injuries and x-ray. In the Council's response to the consultation it was noted

***“Blaenau Ffestiniog is recognised as a deprived area with health inequalities present in the population of about 4,800 and where the age profile of younger people is higher than the Wales average. The intention to move several services including patients beds and the minor injuries unit from the area seems to be increasing the gap which already exists. When these proposals were discussed by the Services Scrutiny Committee on 13 September 2012 it was decided to fully oppose the intention to close Blaenau Ffestiniog hospital as it was completely unreasonable for a town with a substantial population to lose this service. Any proposal by the Health Board to close Blaenau Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital would give rise to concern regarding health services in an extensive rural area, depriving these communities of primary care services such as minor injuries, and secondary services such as end-of-life care, within a reasonable travelling distance.”***

- 3.2 From the discussions with BCUHB there is no operational timetable confirmed more than what was published in the Board papers when the announcement was made but discussion has taken place regarding the intention to develop a Health and Social Care centre at Blaenau Ffestiniog which will ensure provision of services locally. Discussions are taking place regarding what those services will be and BCUHB was asked to make a firmer declaration to confirm their intention. The need to confirm the availability the sum of £4m mentioned in the consultation document was also stressed as this would offer assurance of the intention to develop a new centre.
- 3.3 In the Council's formal response concern was expressed that changing the emphasis to community care rather than hospital care would mean additional demands on the Council's Services especially Social Services and Housing. There is a need therefore to

be cautious as the emphasis of health care changes to ensure that no transfer costs take place from the health service to local government.

- 3.4 Finally specific attention is given to the changes in older people mental health including dementia care. Whilst welcoming the intention to strengthen care in the community it is disappointing to receive confirmation the Uned Meirion and Hafan Ward are permanently closing. The situation is critical in South Gwynedd with a total lack of dementia nursing care and a small number of residential beds in Tywyn and Llan Ffestiniog. The means patients and their families are forced to travel a great distance to receive services. BCUHB recognise the need for provision to meet the situation in Meirionnydd but have not come to a conclusion as to what this should be.
- 3.5 A decision which is welcomed if the intention to target preventive work. This gives a significant opportunity for joint working to improve health and to take advantage of the direct services the Council provides which contribute towards it.

#### **4.0 Community Health Council**

- 4.1 It is understood that the Community Health Council has postponed considering the recommendations of BCUHB and will be doing so on 1 March.

#### **5.0 Next steps and timetable**

- 5.1 From the viewpoint of the Council the initial discussions in the wake of the notice of motion has agreed with BCUHB that there is an opportunity to work together to develop jointly services suitable for the inhabitants of Gwynedd. This includes the new health and care centre in Blaenau Ffestiniog, a more relevant 'enhanced care' model to a rural area and also support for individuals suffering from memory problems. Further discussions to move this on are expected to take place.
- 5.2 In the statements announcing their decisions BCUHB reported on an intention to establish a operational programme structure immediately with specific projects being established in the relevant

clinical programme groups. Accountability to the Operational Team is anticipated monthly and as required to the Board.

- 5.3 It was noted that a more extensive representation at the operational and implementation groups is expected including partners, service users and representation from the Community Health Council.
- 5.4 It is likely that many local authorities have proposed in their responses to the consultation that county strategic forums should be established. BCUHB are researching into roles and terms of reference to the forums and are proposing linking the major changes to locality and community services.

*D P Lewis  
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January 2013*