

# Core Improvement Team

Our Ref:

Being dealt with by: Patricia Flynn

Ext: 6204

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008

William McKee, Chief Executive  
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust  
C/O Public Liaison Services  
Communication Department  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Nore Villa  
Knockbracken Healthcare Park  
Saintfield Road  
BELFAST BT8 8BH

## **STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear Mr McKee

### **Re: New Directions – A conversation on the future delivery of health and social care services in Belfast**

Please find attached a response to your consultation, "New Directions – A conversation on the future delivery of health and social care services in Belfast" which was ratified by Council on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008.

I hope you find this response both useful and informative. If, however, you have any queries in respect of the points raised, please feel free to contact me or to another member of the Core Improvement Unit on 028 90 270234.

Thank you for the opportunity to input the views of Belfast City Council on this issue.

Yours sincerely

**Peter McNaney**  
**Chief Executive**

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## **New Directions - a conversation on the future delivery of health and social care services in Belfast**

### **General Comments on the Consultation Document**

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on this consultation document. The Council is committed to working in partnership to improve the quality of life among the people of the city. One of our key priorities is to create a healthy city through the services we provide directly and through those we provide in partnership with others. In partnership, the needs of local communities can be best addressed by bringing together the relevant agencies to deliver the appropriate mix of public services. Belfast City Council is keen to (continue to) work with the Belfast Trust in this endeavour.

Our Elected Members are particularly interested in the issues affecting health and social care services and request that ongoing dialogue be established between the Trust and the Council to explore the ongoing implementation of the high level proposals set out in the New Directions consultation along with the proposals for the ongoing changes to health structures which we hope will strengthen joined up working with local government.

Belfast City Council would like to highlight the willingness of local government in working in partnership with the health service and other partners, to assist in service provision where appropriate, providing information on services available and shared asset usage and in providing a civic leadership role in terms of partnership working across agencies, particularly on addressing the determinants of ill health. While the Trust mentioned the possibility of working in partnership with the Council and other agencies around services for children, Belfast City Council would like to see the partnership going beyond this to benefit all citizens. The Council is working towards improving the health of the local population and the associated impact of social and health inequalities across a range of areas. The Council provides a range of services which can impact on people's health and well-being - leisure, parks, community services, community safety etc; many of which are provided directly within communities. The Council has a number of facilities, such as community and leisure centres, and operates a range of programmes and initiatives which taken holistically contribute to improved health promotion and well-being. It is important that services such as these, which exist outside the traditional Health and Social Services field, are also considered and utilised where appropriate.

Whilst the Council is generally supportive of the high level policy and guiding principles; there are several issues which the Council feels require further clarification. At this stage, Belfast City Council cannot agree to the Belfast Trust's proposed model of care for some of the "stages of life" contained in the consultation document. Further, detailed information on the implications of the changes in these health services is required, particularly in relation to inpatient obstetric services and acute inpatient mental health services. It is not clear from the consultation document, what is meant by a midwifery led unit (as proposed at the Mater Hospital) and further clarification is sought as to what kind of unit this will be, what services will be staying at this unit and what this will mean in a practical sense for patients. In addition, the Council would seek assurances of a continued level of services for patients who suffer from acute mental illness and will be treated in a single facility rather than in three facilities currently.

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With regard to relocation and rationalisation of services, Belfast City Council acknowledges the economic and efficiency considerations behind the restructuring of the health and social care services; however the Council would urge the Trust to be more innovative and imaginative in seeking solutions rather than simply centralising services. Opportunities may exist to combine with other agencies with regard to sharing assets, or working in partnership to deliver services.

The consultation document highlights a number of issues that the Council feel it would be more meaningful to address after the Trust has provided more detail regarding its future proposals Council feels that there is not enough detail within the published consultation document on which to provide informed feedback. However, the Council would welcome further consultation appreciate being informed of and involved in ongoing consultation and engagement undertaken by the Trust on specific changes to services within the health and social care services along with other affected parties.

The Council would draw attention to the need to support the community as it emerges from 30 years of protracted violent conflict and the impact this has had on mental well-being. We believe that it is the duty of all policy-makers and service delivery agencies to acknowledge the deeply divided context within which we work and to contribute in a meaningful way to developing better relations within our society. This will not only enhance general well-being but will also contribute to government objectives of building community cohesion and developing a more shared society.

Whilst it is not possible at this stage to assess equality and human rights implications, it is essential that future policy decisions, particularly those which affect service provision and access, are properly assessed and fully consulted upon.

The Council has placed customer focus as a central theme within its corporate plan and welcomes the Trust setting out its new strategy in terms of what it will mean to different people at different stages in their life. This approach will help the public engage more meaningfully with the trust and help to ensure better accessibility to the services provided.

In general, the Council agrees that the delivery of services for the local population needs to be simplified. We have made a number of comments on which we would like to receive further communication. The Council would be keen therefore to know how the Trust's consultation has progressed and how you intend to incorporate these and comments from other interested organisations who respond to your consultation into your final strategy.

## Consultation Questions

1	<b>Guiding Principles</b>	<p>The Council is generally supportive of the guiding principles outlined in the consultation document. Indeed, there is much synergy between the Trust's principles and those of Belfast City Council. Our own Corporate Plan is committed to delivering high quality, customer focused services that meet the needs of local people and the city, and which ultimately improves quality of life and well-being. We recognise that this can only be achieved through effective partnership working. We therefore welcome the emphasis on person-centred, joined-up and integrated service delivery. The first two principles relate to reducing health inequalities and prevention, yet the remainder of the document focuses primarily on treatment and care. Addressing health inequalities and prevention should also feature strongly in the rest of the document.</p> <p>The Review of Public Administration will give councils a new power of wellbeing, and Belfast hopes to use this new power to become much more involved in promoting health and wellbeing. Four Councillors from BCC will also be represented on the Local Commissioning Group and there are plans for local collaborative working arrangements between Councils and the new public health agency. The Council looks forward to working with the Trust to identify and maximise potential opportunities to work in a more coordinated and holistic person-centred manner in relation to improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.</p> <p>Belfast City Council recognise the rights of everyone, to have equal access to services and agree that these services must be readily accessible, effective and of good quality. The Council also commend the Trust's focus on developing a 'patient centred' approach to have the right care, delivered by the right person in the right place.</p> <p>The Council has consistently highlighted the need for a more holistic view of healthcare generally, and particularly, for example, in terms of encouraging greater participation in sporting activities and in the use of leisure and recreation facilities as methods of improving well-being and ultimately reducing the levels of a number of preventable illnesses. We particularly endorse an emphasis on prevention, early intervention and participation but consider that prevention and health inequalities could be covered in more detail in the remainder of the document.</p> <p>The Council welcomes that the Trust's core purpose is to 'Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities'. One of the key elements of the Council's own strategy is the use of all assets at its disposal over</p>
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		<p>the coming years such as parks, leisure centres and community centres and by utilizing these assets, the Council aims to deliver health and wellbeing in communities. The Council look forward to working together with the Trust in developing a cohesive health improvement agenda for the city.</p> <p>The Council would welcome ongoing dialogue with the Trust, and other agencies in the city, about the future use of facilities in the city in order that opportunities for shared and integrated facilities can be availed of for the benefit of local communities.</p>
	Do you have any comments or suggested additions to the general principles outlined?	
<b>2</b>	<b>Proposals for the modernisation and reform of services</b>	
	Do you agree with the principles outlined?	The Council feels that it would benefit from further dialogue with the Trust and greater understanding of the implications of these proposals before answering this question.
	Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	<p>It is vital that the proposals for modernisation should also include clear accountability arrangements. The Appleby review of health and social care services in 2005 found that the HPSS lacked “appropriate performance structures, information and clear and effective incentives - rewards and sanctions - at individual, local and national organisational levels to encourage innovation and change”.</p> <p>Belfast City Council welcomes a smaller, more focused department driving the efficient use of resources and service provision.</p>
	Do you agree with the Trust’s favoured model of care?	<p>Following the Review of Public Administration, Councils are to take the lead, through the proposed new powers of community planning, in improving community well-being. Therefore it is essential that the Council has the opportunity to input into the local planning and delivery of all services involved in promoting, protecting and improving health in the city. There are multiple determinants of good health which cut across many organisations and improving these determinants is therefore inextricably linked to community planning process.</p> <p>All appropriate organisations should be involved in the community planning process, facilitated by open and joined up partnership working which identify specific issues and generate approaches that meet local needs and preferences.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>How do I get access to Community Health and Social Care Services and be informed about services that are available to me?</b>	
	(a) Do you agree with the Trust’s strategy to “localise where possible and centralise where necessary”?	
	(b) Do you believe the range of services offered at Wellbeing and Treatment Centres is appropriate?	
	(c) Do you think other services could be	

	offered in the Wellbeing and Treatment Centres?	
	Any further comments:	<p>The Council would strongly support proposals that promote health and wellbeing while reducing health inequalities. A key Council philosophy is the creation, where possible of shared facilities to improve community access to services. There is the potential through interagency partnership at a local level to provide information on services available within the Trust so that the public can have ready access to this. It would also provide the potential to improve the efficiency of services within the Trust, if local communities are better informed regarding how to access facilities.</p> <p>The Parks and Leisure Department has worked with the Trust in the development of the Grove Wellbeing Centre and would be willing to do so again in the future if an opportunity arose that was practicable and was in line with the Council's corporate objectives and priorities.</p> <p>Potential linkages between the other Health and Wellbeing centres and Council Services should be explored.</p> <p>Community development approaches to health should also be considered as part of the system such as community based Healthy Living Centres, Sure Start organisations etc.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Where do I go if I am having a baby?</b>	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined?	As mentioned in the opening comments, the Council would like further clarification regarding the proposal of a midwifery led unit in the Mater Hospital and which services would potentially be available at this unit.
	(b) Should additional principles be established?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	The Council cannot agree with the Trust's favoured model of care without receiving additional detailed information on the nature of the proposals for the Mater Maternity Unit. With the closure of the Jubilee Maternity Unit at Belfast City Hospital and subsequent merger with the Royal Hospital, Belfast has already experienced serious upheaval in maternity care in recent years. The reduction of the range of services available at the Mater Maternity Unit may only add to this. In addition, the impact on patient care must be thoroughly explored and additional consultation carried out on specific changes e.g. increased waiting times, ability of the Royal Maternity Unit to absorb additional displaced patients and risk to mothers and babies.
	Any further comments:	In the Developing Better Services Programme launched by the Health Minister in February 2003, it was proposed to increase the choice of services to expectant mothers by developing midwife led maternity units beside consultant led care should an emergency arise. The information provided by the Trust does not make it clear if there will be consultant led facilities on the Mater Hospital site to support the

		<p>midwife led unit or if this provision will only be available on the Royal Jubilee site. Therefore the Council feels that further clarification around the provision of emergency care at the Mater site and inpatient obstetric services for the Belfast area is required. In addition details of what is meant by midwifery led unit, the services staying at the unit and the practicalities of this would be required.</p> <p>It is important that before any decisions are made on future service provisions at a local level, that proposals are fully and openly consulted on and that the potential implications for patients and communities are fully explained.</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Where do I go if I need to access services for children?</b>	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	In line with the principles outlined, Belfast City Council would like to point out that issues related to the health and wellbeing of Children and Young People are also linked to other key programmes such as active living, promotion of good relations, personal development and representation of young people in decision making. All of which Belfast City Council actively supports and promotes and we look forward to working with the Trust in the future to continue this work.
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the proposed model of care?	Belfast City Council is willing to work in partnership with the Trust and other agencies in all areas of children's services.
	Any further comments:	
<b>6</b>	<b>Where do I go if I need support or care because of my physical or sensory disability?</b>	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Should additional principles be established?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	
	Any further comments:	
<b>7</b>	<b>Where do I go if I need support because I have a learning disability?</b>	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	
	Any further comments:	The needs of people with learning disabilities are distinct from the needs of those with mental health problems and the approaches need to be very different. Elected Members have expressed the view that there are limited facilities provided for people with learning difficulties, particularly young adolescents, and as such additional resources need to be targeted in that area.
<b>8</b>	<b>Where do I go if I am an adult and need mental health services or I have an acute</b>	

	<b>mental illness?</b>	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the proposed model of care?	<p>Belfast City Council would question the plans to close two out of the three acute inpatient mental health facilities. The potential impact of closure of acute services at BCH &amp; the Mater Hospital, and their effect on patients, may mean increased waiting times to be seen by a professional health care worker, and the subsequent impact this may have on vulnerable patients. There is no information provided on the level or pattern of usage of services within the two hospitals which are proposed for closure, the current waiting times or of the ability of the single health care facility to absorb the volume of displaced patients.</p> <p>It is important that when agreeing the future of mental health provision, that treatment facilities are accessible for all people, not just for in and outpatients, but for family, loved ones and carers to be able to visit and/or make arrangements for travel. If all the services are centralised, it may make access difficult for people from those parts of the city that are not near or on direct public transport routes to the proposed facilities.</p> <p>The Bamford Review discusses an aim of 10% reduction in admissions to mental health hospitals in the province by 2011 - how does this guide compare with the closure of two units? Would this not exceed a 10% reduction in the Belfast Trust Area therefore leaving patients in the area at a distinct disadvantage?</p> <p>The issue of suicide is perhaps one which should receive some mention in the document. The Council is currently working with the Trust to develop a response mechanism for addressing potential suicide clusters.</p>
	Any further questions:	
<b>9</b>	<b>Where do I go if I need acute hospital services (that is emergency services, planned care and long term chronic condition management)?</b>	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	
	Any further comments:	<p>Within the Developing Better Services Programme launched by the Health Minister in February 2003, the position of the Mater Hospital as an acute service provider was confirmed for a "considerable period ahead" however the long term intention was for the hospital to become a local hospital. The consultation does not make reference to this possibility therefore the Council would seek confirmation if this is still in the long term plan for the Mater Hospital, and what provision the Belfast Trust will be making to deal with</p>



		the impact this would have on service provision in the city.
<b>10</b>	<b>Where do I go if I need support because I am an older person?</b>	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	
	Any further comments:	Belfast City Council is currently working in partnership with the Trust and other agencies to ensure services for older people are appropriate to need and are accessible. We are committed to delivering better services for older people. The Council, in collaboration with other agencies and older people themselves, has initiated dialogue through its annual older people's convention along with supporting programmes aimed at enhancing older people's quality of life. An All Party reference Group on older people provides political direction to our work in this area. This work will provide opportunities for raising health issues and improving services and access. The Council has a number of facilities, such as community and leisure centres, and operates a range of programmes and initiatives which taken holistically contribute to improved health promotion and well-being. It is important that services such as these, which exist outside the traditional Health and Social Services field, are also considered and utilised where appropriate.

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