

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: HOSC
DATE: 30th January 2014

RE: CCG IVF Policy Harmonisation/Consultation & Engagement

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief the Health Scrutiny Panel on plans to harmonise Walsall CCG's Infertility (IVF) policy and gain the support of the committee on the engagement plan to consult with the public about the proposed changes.
- 1.2 The overall aim of the harmonisation proposal is to ensure that the policy for infertility treatment across Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country is fair, transparent, and resolves the current geographical inequity associated with this treatment.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Opportunities for collaborative working across Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) have been strengthened through the NHS reforms and a programme of policy harmonisation has been accepted by Clinical Commissioning Groups across Birmingham and the Black Country. In light of this opportunity, and the timeliness of a policy review, CCGs across Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country have committed to harmonising their respective infertility policies.
- 2.2 Whilst commissioners will follow national guidance on defining eligibility criteria for certain clinical interventions, the review of the current policy for IVF, demonstrated that there was indeed differences in eligibility criteria being adopted, between the different geographical areas meaning in effect, there was a 'post code lottery' in terms of access. For this reason all of the commissioners listed below, agreed that a harmonisation in terms of policy adoption would lead to a more equitable and standardised approach that is based on best clinical evidence.
- 2.3 A working group was established with the objective of developing a harmonised Infertility (IVF) policy. The group consists of representatives from seven CCGs across Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country and is chaired by a clinician. Participating CCGs include Birmingham Cross City, Birmingham South Central, Solihull, Walsall, Sandwell and West Birmingham, Dudley and Wolverhampton. The process involved a review of existing policies, identification of legal obligations arising from the Equality Act 2010 and also provided an opportunity to consider recommendations from the National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) published in February 2013.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 During the development of the policy there has been engagement with and feedback from Equality and Diversity leads, Quality leads and GP Clinical Leads; comments received from all CCGs have been discussed by the working group and the available evidence considered.
- 3.2 The policy proposal has been considered by Walsall CCG and whilst the degree of change is relatively minor for patients in Walsall, the CCG is committed to involving local people in the development of services/policies and thus engagement with our stakeholders, including patients and the public will be undertaken.

- 3.3 The engagement period is planned to commence on February 3rd 2014 and will close on the 14 March 2014; the CCG will take advantage of all engagement opportunities whilst also providing the additional opportunity to engage 'face to face' with the public.

The engagement plan is as follows:

Engagement Details	Supporting Information
Electronic Distribution via: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Walsall Health Care NHS Trust- Infertility Service Providers- GP Practices/ Pharmacies- Healthwatch- Clinician Allied Professional Forums- Patient Participation Group meetings- GP Practices- GP members meetings (localities)- Practice Managers Forums- NCT- Walsall Childrens Centre's- Survey monkey	<p>A poster is being produced to promote the engagement exercise including details of how to access the survey, an invitation to the engagement event and contact details for further information/discussion.</p> <p>A number of surveys will be printed in booklets and distributed across targeted locations, to include GP practices.</p>
Engagement Event	To be held on: March 5th 2014, 5-7:00pm, Village Hotel Urban Resorts, Tempus Drive, Walsall, WS2 8TJ

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 Walsall CCG is committed to providing financial investment for infertility services for Walsall registered population.

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 Walsall CCG is responsible for commissioning healthcare service for the population it serves and consulting with patients and the public regarding healthcare decisions.

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 Early consideration of existing policies by the working group highlighted inconsistencies with regards to adherence to the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and advice has been sought from Equality and Diversity leads; recommendations have been used to ensure the policy proposed fully adheres to the Equality Act 2010.

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Panel is asked to:

1. Support the proposal to harmonise the infertility policy across Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country Region.
2. Support the engagement process being undertaken by Walsall CCG to consult with stakeholders including the public, about the proposal.

3. To identify any further improvements to enhance the engagement process

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