

**BLACK COUNTRY MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW PROJECT****MESSAGE SENT ON BEHALF OF THE BCMH STEERING GROUP****Summary of agreement following Black Country Mental Health Project Board meeting 18 August**

The mental health and social services leaders of Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley agreed that the focus of work should be on strategic commissioning. The boroughs have real strengths in this area, and will work together to develop models of commissioning which will provide what is needed locally in health and social care.

In terms of provider services, it was agreed that the ultimate destination for all acute and community mental health services should be a single Foundation Trust across the three boroughs. There will be varying routes to Foundation Trust status. These can be followed in parallel, and we are therefore no longer looking at a joint provider organisation for Sandwell, Walsall and Dudley prior to Foundation Trust status. Sandwell will move forward towards a Foundation Trust application. Dudley and Walsall will explore models of reaching Foundation status together. This may be as a Community Foundation Trust or an NHS Partnership Trust, which in turn would seek Foundation Trust status. Agreeing to move at different speeds toward a united single goal, means that we can focus on service improvement, rather than creating anxieties about organisational change.

For these reasons, the existing Project Board has chosen to stand down. Chief Executives and Directors of Social Services will now form a new Steering Group. There will also be a separate group to look at shared approaches to commissioning.

Jackie Lynton's secondment comes to its end at the close of the year, and it was agreed that new arrangements would need to be made in the light of this.

August 2006