



**Better Mental Health Services
for Walsall and Dudley –
a Consultation Document**

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We have published this consultation paper so that you can give us your views on it. The consultation is running from 26 September to 19 December 2007. Any views you pass back to us during this period will have an influence on the final decisions we make.

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You can email Marsha Ingram, Project Director on marsha.ingram@abetteridea.info with your views.

You can ring one of our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) representatives in Walsall on 01922 618 358 or Dudley on 0800 073 0517 and we will write down what you tell us over the phone.

You can post comments on our website www.abetteridea.info.

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1. The way things are now

At the moment, there are four different organisations which provide mental health services in Walsall and Dudley. These are Dudley Primary Care Trust, Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust and Walsall and Dudley Local Authorities' Directorates of Adult Social Care. Each of these organisations manage mental health services alongside other kinds of services and, although these organisations are quite large, the mental health part of their work is small compared to other mental health organisations elsewhere in the country.

Government policy is encouraging Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to focus on commissioning services (that is, assessing what services are needed by their population and purchasing them from other organisations) rather than providing them directly. Neither Dudley nor Walsall mental health services are large enough to be 'stand alone' independent organisations. We are confident that by developing this partnership, we will be able to remain close to our local communities in each borough whilst at the same time, reap the benefits of being part of a larger, mental-health focused organisation.

2. What we propose

We think it makes sense to create a mental health organisation for Dudley and Walsall which is entirely focused on mental health, generating a whole range of benefits for our service users, their carers and our staff. This is why we are proposing to create a single NHS Mental Health Trust for Dudley and Walsall, which would manage mental health services in the two boroughs.

The services which would be delivered by the new Trust would include:

- **All community and inpatient mental health services for adults of working age and Older People.**
- **All existing NHS-provided Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).**
- **Substance Misuse services.**
- **The medical component of Learning Disability services.**
- **Psychology services for people with mental health problems.**
- **Mental Health Social Care services which are managed by the PCTs on behalf of the Local Authorities via either formal or informal partnership agreements.**

In the future it would mean that services would be provided by an organisation which is solely focused on mental health, holds expertise and shares best practice, and has the potential to develop more specialist care in the Black Country, meaning that fewer patients would have to travel elsewhere for certain types of treatment. To begin with, this would not mean any changes to services. These proposals are not about moving or closing locally-based mental health services - one of our primary motives is to make peoples' access to services easier, not more difficult.

3. Who is involved?

The partners involved in this consultation are Walsall Teaching PCT, Dudley PCT and Walsall and Dudley Local Authorities' Directorates of Adult Social Care. We also work very closely with our partners in the community and voluntary sector. NHS West Midlands (the 'Strategic Health Authority') oversees the consultation process, to make sure that it is fair, and the Secretary of State for Health will make the final decision based on consideration of your responses to our proposals.

The most important partners, though, are the patients and carers in the two boroughs.

4. Why are we proposing these changes?

There are a number of reasons why we are proposing to bring services together in this way:

- We want to create an organisation which is solely focused on mental health issues and whose only priorities will be about improving mental health services.
- A Trust covering Dudley and Walsall will be large enough to use resources more effectively but will still be 'small enough' to retain and develop local links and partnerships.
- We will be able to increase the involvement and influence of service users and carers and further develop links with local, regional and national networks and organisations.
- Walsall and Dudley services have developed strengths in different areas. In developing a partnership, we can share expertise, knowledge and learning to ensure that all our services are of the very highest standard.
- Being a larger, specialist Trust, we will be able to offer greater opportunities for training, career development and research, enabling us to attract the highest quality staff.
- We will be able to apply to become a Foundation Trust in line with other NHS organisations and develop greater freedom and autonomy. Neither Dudley nor Walsall services are large enough to become a Foundation Trust independently.
- Elsewhere in the region, other NHS Mental Health Service provider organisations are tending to become larger and getting ready to become Foundation Trusts, if they haven't already done so. If we don't develop a Walsall / Dudley partnership, we are concerned that our services may be 'acquired' by another Trust and that our ability to influence and shape services by local involvement may be lost.

5. Specifically, how will things work?

Most services will stay the same, which means that Dudley patients will continue to receive treatment in the community or at centres in Dudley, and Walsall patients will receive their treatment in Walsall.

Some specialised services are currently provided at some distance from Walsall or Dudley and some patients currently have to travel outside of the boroughs to access these services. We will not be able to bring all of these services close to home immediately, but it will be our aim to bring more of them into the two boroughs as time goes on.

There are some more specialised services which we provide to a small extent in both boroughs, but where we could provide a better service if we combined our resources. These might include eating disorder services and some therapies.

Important:

Do you think you or someone you know will be particularly affected by some of these changes? If so, please take the time to let us know what you think. Also, are there other services which we should think about providing differently?

6. What does this mean for staff?

Creating a new Mental Health Trust is about reorganising things so that they make more sense and work better. It is not a plan to cut costs or reduce staff numbers. Having one organisation may mean a smaller top-level management team, but we are not expecting there to be a major impact on jobs for front-line staff.

Staff who currently work for the NHS would be employed by the new Mental Health Trust, and they would transfer from their current organisations by a system known as TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment). In summary, the TUPE system ensures that peoples' terms and conditions of employment are protected when their employment is transferred to another organisation.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and Walsall Council will consult with social care staff about the most appropriate mechanism for them to work within the new organisation.

One of the most important benefits of a new Mental Health Trust would be that a larger organisation would offer better career opportunities to staff, and be a more attractive organisation for recruiting new staff. There may also be opportunities for career development which currently do not exist in the current set-up.

7. What are the timescales?

We believe the best time for a new mental health organisation to begin would be 1 April 2008. In order for that to happen, we would expect the the Secretary of State would make a decision about whether or not to approve the new organisation as soon as possible after the end of the consultation period on 19 December 2007.

If we receive approval to go ahead, then we would first focus on getting the new Trust Board in place so that the organisation would be 'up and running' as soon as possible. The NHS Appointments Commission would appoint a Chair and non-Executive Directors and we would recruit a Chief Executive and other Board members. We would expect to have a full Board in place by 1st April 2008.

8. How would the organisation be structured?

The new Mental Health Trust would have its own Board, Chief Executive and Senior Management Team. In this sense, it would be a fully independent organisation within the NHS, just like other NHS Trusts. Its services would be commissioned by the existing four organisations. This reflects the legal obligation of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Walsall Council, Dudley Primary Care Trust and Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust.

This 'Commissioner - Provider' relationship is relatively new in the NHS, and is worth explaining. The Provider — in our case the new Mental Health Trust — employs the staff, owns the buildings and equipment, and organises and provides the services to patients. A doctor or nurse, for example, would be working for the Provider. The Commissioner — in our case one of the Primary Care Trusts or the local authorities — is legally responsible to arrange services for people who live in their area. For this they receive a certain amount of public money, and they use this money to buy, or commission, services from the Provider.

This means that, if you were unhappy about the treatment you were receiving, you could talk first to the new Mental Health Trust. However, if you were not satisfied with their response, you could also talk to the Primary

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Care Trust or Local Authority where you lived. If you thought that a service was not being provided at all, you would talk to the Primary Care Trust or Local Authority. In practice you don't need to remember any of this — if you had a query or difficulty with your services, our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) would help you to find your way. This is the case whether or not we establish a new Mental Health Trust.

Important:

Your rights as a patient will not change whether we decide to establish a new Mental Health Trust or not. However, a Mental Health Trust would be much more aware of the needs of its patients and service users, and would be actively listening to what people have to say on mental health issues. As with the rest of this document, please feel free to comment on these arrangements. Your views are critical feed back for us in deciding what the priorities will be for the new organisation.

9. What is the long term future?

In the long term, we would like a new Mental Health Trust to be able to prepare to become a Foundation Trust. This would give it more freedom to organise its own affairs, and particular responsibilities to work closely with local people. Many acute hospitals — often known as 'general hospitals' — have become Foundation Trusts, and it is likely that all acute hospitals will eventually follow.

We would also like to work towards an even larger organisation, based around the principles we have outlined in this proposal, which would provide mental health services across the entire Black Country. However, other partners do not wish to work toward this at the present time.

10. What we are asking for you to comment on

Your views are absolutely crucial to us. The Secretary of State, in deciding whether to approve the new Trust, will look at your responses to these proposals to inform his decision. Furthermore, your ideas and views will be central in how we develop the new organisation. All of the responses that we receive will be shared with the Dudley and Walsall Joint Scrutiny Committee – the Local Authority panel which scrutinises health and social care developments – to help ensure transparency and independence.

We want to ask you to comment on these proposals: what are your thoughts on creating a single Mental Health Trust? You may want to take a view on the question as a whole, or you may want to comment on specific areas. Please feel free to reply to us in any way which makes sense to you.

As part of this consultation, we are also interested in your views and ideas about mental health services in general. If you have an idea for improving how we organise Mental Health Services which is not covered in this proposal, please feel free to add that to your response.

You may want to respond anonymously, in your own name, or in the name of an organisation or group of people. We will publish a summary of all the responses, and we will send copies of these to everyone who has given us contact details. However, we will not take your responses any less seriously if you choose not to give your name or contact details.

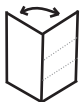
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