

Select Committee on Health and Adult Social Care - 4th July 2011

The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Maternity capping

1.0 Purpose of Report

This document is presented to advise the Committee that The Dudley Group of Hospitals (DGH) is in discussion with its stakeholders regarding its requirement to restrict the number of births in its Maternity Unit to maintain safe operating levels.

2.0 Background

The birth rate at The Dudley Group of Hospitals has continued to increase year on year from 3777 births in 2002/3 to 4718 births during 2009/10 and 2010/11 figures of 4902.

2010/11	4902
2009/10	4718
2008/09	4613
2007/08	4440

Bookings and deliveries are rising not only for Dudley women but also women from bordering boroughs, highlighting DGH Maternity Service to be the 'Hospital of Choice' for a growing section of the local population.

The closure of Sandwell Maternity Unit has shown a significant increase in bookings with Russells Hall Hospital (RHH) Maternity Unit. Data comparing Q4 of 2009/10 to Q4 of 2010/11 shows an increase of 12.6% bookings overall, but Dudley GP patients increased just 1.5%, while Sandwell women bookings increased by 69.7% and now comprise 28.4% of all bookings.

Despite full support of The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Executive Board in funding the increase of midwife posts, difficulties remain for the unit in meeting the continued rise in bookings:

- Obstetrician ratio to births will need to increase
- Physical bed capacity will not meet demand
- Unit currently equipped to meet optimum levels of 380 births per month (4560pa)

3.0 Options

3.1 To contain safe level of activity there is a need to:

- Restrict bookings based on geographical boundary (preferred option)
- Restrict bookings over contracted 380 per month (this option not favoured as could have more impact Dudley women)

3.2 To achieve this we will:

- Continue discussions with stakeholders (commissioners, GPs and local providers, Dudley Maternity Management Team)
- Agree local strategy with neighbouring provider units – i.e., City Hospital is proactively marketing available service capacity
- Agree communication strategy to ensure women aware of alternative choice of units within vicinity

4.0 Guidelines

4.1 Safer Childbirth guidelines

5.0 Equality Impact

5.1 Once set restrictions will be clear and will apply equally. An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 For information

6.2 Reassurance that the favoured option would not affect Dudley women

6.3 Reassurance that current pressures have not impacted on service quality

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