

Case Study

The Working Together Programme - Children's Surgery

Background

The Working Together Programme (WTP) is a collaboration of 7 NHS Trusts, 8 Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS England across South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw, North Derbyshire and Wakefield. The programme has come together to look at how services can be better delivered in a safe and sustainable way across the area and consider if there is a case for change.

The commissioners lead a review of the children's surgery and anaesthesia services and working with providers developed a number of options for the future service. The Clinical Senate worked with commissioners over a number of months advising on the Case for Change, the service standards and the proposed options on how to change the service. We were asked to advise **"whether the clinical evidence base supports the options that are being considered for service change? Are there any further issues or concerns that may need to be considered before going to consultation?"**

The Problem

Over recent years there has been a reduced number of surgeons who are skilled and experienced in paediatric surgery which has led to difficulties in providing a paediatric surgical service in all local hospitals. This has led to differing standards of care for children depending on where they live or where they present for treatment and healthcare. Commissioners and providers agreed that this was not a sustainable way of providing services for the future and that with the upcoming workforce pressures that change was needed.

Our Advice

We agreed that the Case for Change provided a comprehensive analysis of the issues facing the service and that the service standards were appropriate. We supported the proposed tiered approach to the service implemented through a Managed Clinical Network as described in the options appraisal and endorsed the preferred 3 hub model. We felt that more clarity was needed on patient flows and activity particularly across the boundaries with Northern Lincolnshire, Chesterfield and Mid Yorkshire.

Our Impact

The support provided by the senate was used to reassure clinical commissioners that the case for change, proposed redesign, model and specification was one that was supported clinically and one that would be sustainable within the context of the review.

The senate report also reassured members of the programme team across commissioners and providers that the redesign proposal was responsive to the case for change and offer a solution in line with the previous evidence presented to the clinical senate.

Testimonial

The senate provided responsive, high quality and clearly articulated views to commissioners and provided a very comprehensive assessment based upon the question posed. The quality of the clinical engagement was of the highest possible standard, which has supported progressing the options on the redesign.

"...provided a very comprehensive assessment"

