

Tuesday 15 January 2007

Press release

Public urged to make submissions on Brent Birth Centre future

Local people are encouraged to have their say on proposals for the future of the Brent Birth Centre before the public consultation closes in several weeks' time on February 8.

The three-month consultation is being run by Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust and The North West London Hospitals NHS Trust.

Following the end of the consultation, submissions will be put together in a feedback document which will be presented to Brent PCT's board in March.

The Trust and PCT are seeking views on four options (see note to editors below) but are also keen for people to come forward with other suggestions and ideas as part of the consultation.

There are several reasons the trusts are considering the centre's future.

Despite actively promoting the service, the vast majority of women from Brent and Harrow who are suitable for a midwifery led unit are not choosing the Brent Birth Centre. Midwives at the centre deliver only 300 births a year (about 25 a month) when they should be delivering more than 1,000.

The Centre costs the local NHS £1.2m a year to run but because of the lack of demand the Trust is running the service at a loss of £300,000 a year.

Members of the public can find out more by logging on to www.nwlh.nhs.uk/brentbirth or can call 020 8869 3701 for a copy of the consultation document. Two public meetings were held in November.

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Notes to editors:

1. The Brent Birth Centre was opened in 2004 at Central Middlesex Hospital and is managed by The North West London Hospitals NHS Trust. It provides a 'home from home' environment for women and is designed for women who are expected to have straightforward

deliveries and who want midwife support during their labour and delivery.

2. The four options are:
 - 1) Do nothing - the Trust would continue to provide midwife-led services at the Brent Birth Centre at Central Middlesex Hospital.
 - 2) Transfer all maternity care to Northwick Park Hospital's Maternity Unit. This would mean that there would no longer be a midwifery unit at either Northwick Park or Central Middlesex hospitals. There would also be no antenatal services provided at Central Middlesex Hospital
 - 3) Transfer inpatient (delivery) maternity care to Northwick Park Hospital's Maternity Unit. Create a dedicated midwife-led unit within Northwick Park Hospital's recently refurbished maternity unit. Continue to provide antenatal care at the Brent Birth Centre.
 - 4) Transfer inpatient (delivery) maternity care to Northwick Park Hospital's Maternity Unit. Create a dedicated midwifery-led unit within Northwick Park Hospital's recently refurbished maternity unit. Provide antenatal services at Central Middlesex Hospital, but not within the Brent Birth Centre.