
**PROPOSED MERGER BETWEEN COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON
PRIORITY SERVICES (CDDPS) NHS TRUST AND TEES AND NORTH EAST
YORKSHIRE (TNEY) NHS TRUST**

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor Bryan Thistlethwaite, Adult Services
Portfolio Councillor Chris McEwan, Children’s Services**

**Responsible Director(s) – Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services
Margaret Asquith, Director of Children’s Services**

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Cabinet’s views on the consultation process relating to the proposed merger between County Durham and Darlington Priority Services (CDDPS) NHS Trust and Tees and North East Yorkshire (TNEY) NHS Trust.

Information and Analysis

2. CDDPS and TNEY currently provide mental health, learning disability and addictive behaviour services to children and adolescents, adults and older people across County Durham, the Tees Valley and North East Yorkshire localities.
3. The two Trusts are consulting on a proposal to merge and the consultation document is attached as **Appendix A**. (website address to view the consultation document http://www.cddps.nhs.uk/media/TNEY_Consultation.pdf)
4. The merger is proposed in order to continue to develop and extend the range of services they provide and to assist future application for Foundation Trust status. It is also contended that a combined Trust would be able to deliver more cost effective services, closer to where service users live, rather than as at present, commissioners requiring to fund individual out-of-area placements.
5. There is a Potential Organisational Change Project Board in operation, which is leading on work to support implementation of the merger if the proposal is supported.
6. The Project Board is establishing appropriate sub-groups as required, such as on Human Resources issues, to ensure all necessary aspects of a merger are considered.
7. Darlington Borough Council is represented on the Project Board by the Head of Adult Social Services.

Response to the Consultation

8. The Consultation Plan for the proposed merger is attached as **Appendix B** and the Council has the opportunity to comment on the following proposal by 14 November 2005.

Should County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust and Tees and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust come together to form a new trust providing all the current services in County Durham, the Tees Valley and North East Yorkshire?

9. In considering this question locality arrangements are an important consideration as with a larger organisation, there is likely to be less local control. Unfortunately, there is a lack of information in the consultation document about locality arrangements. Further, the consultation events have not added further details to provide assurance that there will not be a detrimental impact on local services, particularly as considerable savings are required from the merger.
10. The lack of clarity about the impact on both the management of front line services and operational staffing arrangements is therefore the main concern that needs to be included in the response to this consultation.
11. A further impact of the change is an increasing focus on higher need services provided by the new Trust, with more community based services provided through other mechanisms in localities. However, for this to be successful there would need to be a transfer of funding from the new Trust to other local arrangements and there is some concern that this transfer may not follow. The possibility of losing a Darlington PCT to support the case being made for that transfer of funds and development of local mental health services, adds further to this concern.
12. Additionally, the proposed merger is at the same time as the proposed PCT boundary changes and will therefore, put additional strain on the social/health care system overall. Finally, it is also important to consider the outcomes for service users that such a change will facilitate and this has not been addressed in the consultation.

Legal Implications

13. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

14. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

15. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

16. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does represent an urgent matter, as any response to the consultation needs to be submitted by November 14th 2005.

Recommendation

17. It is recommended that a letter be sent responding to the consultation based on the comments outlined in this report.

Reasons

18. To enable the Council to submit a response to the consultation as the proposal constitutes a significant change in the configuration of health provider services to many vulnerable people in Darlington – people with mental health problems, learning disabilities and substance misuse issues.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Background Papers

- (i) Appendix A - Consultation on Merger – County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust and Tees and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust (attached).
- (ii) Appendix B - Consultation Plan – Caroline Parnell, Project Manager, Tees and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust (attached).

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