

Redbridge health scrutiny committee talk on  
Intermediate Care and Wanstead Hospital  
Wednesday 13 May 2015

At the January meeting there was a unanimous vote [with one abstention] to tell the Senior Officer present to refer the RCCG's proposals to the Secretary of State. Instead of the fully written case like your Chair's 9 page letter to the RCCG, a mere 1 ½ pages of text was sent. Not surprisingly, on 4 March the Secretary of State responded asking for more evidence in order that the request be adequately considered.

9 weeks later, although there was a working group, there is no sign of any evidence being compiled. These 65 pages of the history of the Intermediate Care issue get us nowhere. Now we learn that some Members wonder if there is enough evidence! Apart from the Decision Making Business Case, there are the consultation documents as well asking questions of NELFT and the RCCG like bed numbers and occupancy.

In any case, it is the Independent Reconfiguration Panel's job to decide if there is enough evidence or if the evidence warrants an investigation. They can call for more information from any of the NHS bodies or Councils involved if they wish.

The 'for' and 'against' section is heavily biased in favour against referral, while some of it is inaccurate. For example, the RCCG refused to allow an extension to the consultation period: it was the debate in the House held by John Cryer, which secured the extra fortnight. Also, I checked on the distribution of the public consultation document in Wanstead. There were 30 untouched copies in the library [where the librarians had no idea it was there] When I showed the document to staff at the GP surgeries Wanstead Clinic, Boots and the Wanstead Pharmacy, no-one had seen a copy or was aware of the consultation.

Is Redbridge's history of being the milk cow for the NHS services in the other two Boroughs to be continued? Barking and Dagenham retain Grays Court, Havering have a new 'Elders' ward at Queens and will get some new

intermediate care beds on the St George Hospital site and Redbridge gets ... cuts.

Following a disastrous CQC report, Whipps Cross has joined King George and Queens on the Special Measures list. It is therefore vital that Redbridge, with its growing population, protects all its NHS services, as they are already severely overstretched, with a constant shortage of beds.

In spite of the validation of the Health4NEL consultation on King George's Hospital A+E closure, the plan to close it in the autumn of 2013 has still not been implemented because the figures were wrong. The same thing is happening here. If Wanstead Hospital closes this autumn, the land will be sold immediately by NHS Property Services – there will be no going back.

Remember, the three Boroughs ought to have 184 beds – there are 104. The plan is to reduce the beds to 40 permanent ones, which can be increased to 69. Although the RCGG will not disclose intermediate bed occupation, we know the monthly demand varies widely and has been well over 69 some months.

Wanstead Hospital was given an excellent report by the CQC in May 2013, and its premises are designed for intermediate care. Why spend money on creating expensive intermediate care beds elsewhere?

And where will these new intermediate care beds be in King George? BHRUT still cannot provide any details – with its current problems they are pushed to provide the current service. Unfortunately there has been a great deal of mistrust of local NHS service management among residents for some time. This must not spread to our Council's NHS work too.