

Breast Care Services Review

Stakeholder Newsletter

Newsletter 3

September 2009

Welcome

This is the third edition of the Breast Care Services Review Stakeholder Newsletter, and as you will see, despite being in the midst of summer holiday season, we have achieved a good deal over the last six weeks.

If there is anything you would like to see included in this newsletter, or if you have any comments for us, please contact Emma Phillips using the details at the end.

Location of the hub

In the last newsletter, we told you about an independent panel meeting on the 4th of September to hear the views of stakeholders on the key clinical adjacencies and accessibility issues that might inform the decision about the future location of the Bristol hub.

The panel received presentations from clinicians, patient groups, the Local Involvement Networks (LINKs), management/estates representatives from the two potential sites (the new Southmead Hospital, part of North Bristol NHS Trust and the Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI) redevelopment, part of University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust). Clinicians presented in groups according to their discipline, rather than by Trust. The breast surgeons from North Bristol Trust and UHB presented jointly with the Head of Avon Breast Screening Unit. Breast care nurses from Frenchay and the BRI also presented together. Similarly, all the patient groups for Bristol (BUST, Bosom Buddies and Young Women 4 Young Women) joined together to present their views to the panel.

After a constructive day the panel had a number of outstanding issues to explore. Therefore, the Project Board has agreed for the panel to reconvene and meet with the clinical group as a whole in order to answer their outstanding questions. This is expected to take place on the 6th of October, 2009.

Breast screening: questions and answers

The Avon Breast Screening Unit, based at Central Health Clinic, currently screens 134, 277



women across Avon (Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and Bath). Screening is recognised as being an important part of the breast care service and we are committed to ensuring screening is integrated into the proposed new model. Recently, a number of questions relating to screening have been raised and we thought it would be useful to address some of those here.

Many of the following questions, and more, are answered on the NHS Cancer Screening Programmes website: <http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/breastscreen/index.html>

Q: Why are women called for breast screening?

A: The NHS Breast Screening Programme is an effective part of the UK's efforts to reduce the death toll from breast cancer. Mammograms can detect small changes in breast tissue which may indicate cancers which are too small to be felt either by the woman herself or by a doctor. In September 2000, research was published which demonstrated that the screening programme had lowered mortality rates from breast cancer in the 55-69 age group.

Q: How frequently are women called for breast screening?

A: Women between the ages of 50 and 70 are called for screening every three years.

Q: What is the age range for breast screening?

A: The NHS Breast Screening Programme provides free breast screening for women in the UK between the ages of 50 and 70. This is due to expand to include women from the age of 47 to the age of 73.

Q: Why is the age range being expanded?

A: Because the programme is a rolling one which invites women from GP practices in turn, not every woman will receive an invitation as soon as she is 50. By extending the age range by three years either end, all women will receive an invitation by the time they turn 50 and will still be invited until they turn 70.

Q: Why aren't younger women screened?

A: Women under the age of 50 are not offered routine screening because mammograms are not as effective in pre-menopausal women as the density of the breast tissue makes it more difficult to detect problems, and also because the incidence of breast cancer is lower in this age group.

Q: Where do women go for breast screening now?

A: Currently, approximately 75% of screening is carried out at Central Health Clinic and 25% in mobile vans.

Q: Where will women go for breast screening in the future?

A: Our intention is for screening to take place in the hub and satellite hub (Weston General Hospital) and in the spokes. The location of the hub and the spokes is still to be determined. The main consideration in deciding on the location of the spokes will be access for patients and we will be organising a work shop to hear your views on where the spokes should be located. The Project Board has recognised the facilities that are already in place at Central Health Clinic and the benefits that this city centre site has for many women, therefore, regardless of the location of the hub, we anticipate Central Health Clinic will remain as a site for screening.

Q: What is the difference between mobile and static screening units?

A: When we refer to mobile units, we mean vans that tour the area to provide screening. These vans stay in one place for substantial lengths of time (until the population of that area has been screened). For example, a mobile van will stay in Bath for a year. Unfortunately, the mobile vans do not currently have access for disabled patients, so these women have to visit Central Health Clinic for their screening.

Static units are mammogram machines that are installed and remain in the same place, for example, at Central Health Clinic and at Weston General Hospital.

Q: What is digital mammography?

A: Digital mammography is a mammography system where x-ray film is replaced by solid-state detectors that convert x-rays into electric signals. These detectors are similar to those found in digital cameras. The electrical signals are used to produce images of the breast that can be seen on a computer screen or printed on special films to look like regular mammograms. From the patient's point of view, digital mammography is essentially the same as the screen-film system. The mammograms will be taken the same way. Locally we are looking at the best way to identify the resources required to support this development.

Q: What happens when screening results show something unusual?

A: If something unusual is detected through screening, women are referred to a breast consultant.

We are keen to involve users of the screening service in the Breast Care Services Review. If you have experienced the screening programme and would like to get involved, please contact Emma Phillips (details at the end of this newsletter).

The role of the satellite hub

You may have heard us refer to Weston General Hospital as a satellite hub and wondered what we meant by this. This is our explanation of the role of Weston General Hospital as a satellite hub:

We are well aware of the excellent service currently provided by the breast care team at Weston General Hospital and our aim is to build on and strengthen this. As a satellite hub, Weston will continue to see local patients referred with breast symptoms as well as those women in its local population diagnosed with breast disease through the breast screening programme. This will benefit patients and their relatives who live close to Weston as well as those in outlying districts, for example the residents of Clevedon, who might prefer to have their surgery closer to home. The proposed new model will also see the Weston team join the weekly multi-disciplinary team meetings at the Bristol hub via video link and allow them to contribute to discussions relating not just to their own patients but to those of the other teams as well. The video link will also permit a more immediate link with the opinions of plastic surgeons. The majority of patients in Weston, whose surgery can be done just as effectively in Weston as in Bristol, will benefit in the knowledge that their cases will have been discussed by the whole team to ensure that they get the very best treatment.



Equality Impact Assessment

Dr Jo Williams, Specialist Trainee in Public Health, and colleagues have undertaken a Health Equity Audit of the current breast care services. The Project Board reviewed this at its meeting on the 11th of September and was pleased to note the examples of good practice mentioned in the report, which include:

- Outreach work by the screening service to South Asian women
- Trial of extended hours for screening
- Double appointments for people with learning disabilities at the screening service
- Research on the psychological needs of South Asian breast cancer patients.

Following this work, the Project Team is undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment. As part of this, a workshop will be held and we are going to invite representatives from the Older People's Forum, the Cancer Help for Ethnic Communities programme, the Disability Forum and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum. The aim of the work shop will be to suggest what needs to be put in place to ensure the breast care service is equitable and accessible for all users.

Future developments

Spokes workshop

The results of our recently undertaken activity analysis have suggested that five spokes will be required to provide follow up care, which may include screening. The location of the spokes will be dependent on the location of the hub. We are hopeful that when the independent panel reconvenes at the 6th of October a preferred location for the hub will be identified. Once this has happened, we will be holding a workshop to determine where best to locate the spokes. We want to make sure that the spokes are in suitable locations, accessible for patients and well spaced out across the patch so that everyone is able to receive care closer to home.

Website updates

Recent updates to our website include:

- Report following the multi-disciplinary team visit to Nottingham Breast Institute
- Revised document outlining the proposed new service
- Health Equity Audit

How to contact us

If you would like more information, or to get involved with the Breast Care Services Review, please contact Emma Phillips via email, emma.phillips@bristolpct.nhs.uk, or telephone 0117 984 1629.

Also look at the Bristol Health Services Plan website www.avon.nhs.uk/bhsp and go to Current service reviews and click on Breast care.

If you would like further copies of this newsletter or in another format, please contact the BHSP office at South Plaza, Marlborough Street, Bristol, BS13NX, telephone: 0117 9841629 or emma.phillips@bristolpct.nhs.uk