Dear Conor Burke,

Spending NHS Money Wisely

This letter is in response to the Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group consultation on proposals for IVF, sterilisation, prescribing, cosmetic procedures and weight loss surgery, and represents the views of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

IVF

We would support some reduction in the IVF offer, but would not support stopping funding. IVF is an area that will generate significant attention, and our members consider that the population of Barking and Dagenham would not be able to self-fund IVF if funding was withdrawn. For this reason, we would support the move to funding two embryo transfers, but would not support stopping funding IVF treatment entirely.

Male and female sterilisation

We are not in favour of disinvesting in male and female sterilisation. We are aware that long acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) and IUD, “the coil”, are alternative methods of controlling fertility. Vasectomies and tubal ligation are permanent methods of sterilisation, in some cases, such as where a woman is subject to domestic violence female sterilisation the latter may be the only reasonable option.

There are also two cost issues to consider, reduction in sterilisation will inevitably increase demand on the public health funded LARC and IUD contraceptive service; while this is at it should be, we must not fall into the trap of considering that by cutting the service that the cost to the public purse will be eliminated. A more important consideration, particularly for the population of Barking and Dagenham, is that where individuals are not able to access sterilisation, they may not automatically opt for an alternative form of contraception. This is particularly true of individuals in a chaotic relationship, and one potential outcome is a child who is then taken into care. The cost of care clearly outweighs the cost of an initial sterilisation.

The borough would be keen to work with BHR CCGs to improve the contraception offer for local women and thereby reduce the rate of abortion and repeat abortions.

(18 May 2017)

(Sent via email to: Haveyoursay.bhr@nhs.net)
which may generate a saving for the CCG. However, we would see sterilisation and vasectomy as part of a holistic contraception offer for appropriately selected and counselled patients.

**NHS prescribing**

We agree that stopping prescribing of some items, while not ideal, is reasonable in the current climate. We support the stopping of prescribing gluten-free products, over the counter medications, the listed travel vaccinations. We agree that dentists are the best placed professionals to prescribe dental medications; however, there are some oral medications, such as artificial saliva that may be need to be prescribed by a medical practitioner, as part of a therapy package. For Soya milk, while we recognise that babies are equally as likely to be allergic to Soya milk as they are to cow’s milk, we do not agree to endorse the stopping of prescribing of Soya milk in cases where the child medically requires the product.

**Cosmetic Procedures**

We agree that cosmetic procedures should be considered on an individual funding review. As indicated, where the surgery is necessary as a result of cancer we would support that this is continued.

**Weight loss surgery**

While we support the eligibility criteria for bariatric surgery we strongly recommend that a Tier 3 service is set up as an entry point to this surgery. We consider that to make sure that weight loss surgery is effective, that individuals should first have access to Tier 3 weight loss services, as recommended by NICE. We recommend that people are put forward for surgery only after they have had Tier 3 intervention, unless the circumstances are exceptional. We note that bariatric surgery will still be available to individuals that meet the eligibility criteria, including morbidly obese people with diabetes, for who it is a very effective treatment.

We consider that our response will support the spending of money wisely for the residents of Barking and Dagenham.

Yours sincerely

*Councillor Peter Chand,* Chair of the Health and Adult Services Select Committee and

*Councillor Maureen Worby,* Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration

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