

PRESS RELEASE

28 January 2016

Decision on proposals following public consultation

Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has today (28 January) approved recommendations to delay a decision on recent proposals to stop funding hearing aids for mild hearing loss, and to make changes to GP-accessed physiotherapy.

Board members will meet again at the end of March, giving providers and commissioners more time to develop alternative cost-saving options.

Mid Essex CCG has, however, decided to go ahead with proposals to stop routine funding of gluten-free foods on prescription and to not routinely fund vasectomy and female sterilisation in mid Essex.

With immediate effect, the CCG will only offer funding for gluten-free foods and vasectomy and female sterilisation in clinically exceptional cases.

Today's decisions follow an eight-week public consultation, run from 2 November to 28 December last year by Enable East, an independent NHS not-for-profit organisation.

More than 1,200 people responded via an online survey; approximately 130 people attended six meetings aimed at encouraging people to share their views; and around 60 letters from professional bodies and members of the public were submitted during the consultation period.

Dr Donald McGeachy, Medical Director of Mid Essex CCG, said: "We are very grateful to the many people who shared their views and gave feedback on the proposals.

"Given the strength of public feeling expressed during the consultation and the support shown by professional bodies to working with local providers, we have decided to delay a decision on changing policy for hearing aids for mild hearing loss and GP-accessed physiotherapy. We want to explore other ways that we can make savings.

"However, we are still in a position where we have to save £15.7m this year, and still need to take some very tough decisions.

Issued by the Communications and Engagement team, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group

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“After considering every aspect – feedback from local people, national campaign groups, clinical guidance – we have decided to stop routinely funding gluten-free food on prescription and to stop routinely funding vasectomy and female sterilisation.

“We are aware of the distress this may cause some people; it has been a very tough decision to make. However, given the severe financial situation in mid Essex, we need to take action.”

The full outcome report of the consultation, produced by Enable East, is available via www.midessexccg.nhs.uk.

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Notes to Editor:

1. For more information, contact Rachel Harkes, MECCG Head of Communications and Engagement, on 01245 459414 or email rachelharkes@nhs.net