

Whipps Cross Redevelopment: Action4Whipps Statement *Please share.*

Recent news reports are saying that, in reaction to public concern, Barts Healthcare Trust have committed to zero reduction in bed numbers at the new Whipps Cross Hospital, and to keeping the Margaret Centre for palliative and end-of-life care. While it's welcome that Barts are responding to public concern, there are still many questions to be answered, both about bed numbers and the Margaret Centre.

Concerning the beds, the Redevelopment Director for Barts' qualifies the commitment to maintaining the current "bed base" with "**should that prove necessary.**" His statement is not clear about the actual future of the Margaret Centre.

<https://www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/news/more-and-better-services-planned-for-a-new-whipps-cross-hospital-11506>

Bed numbers:

Barts refers to "*flexibility*" in planning, design, and bed numbers, and that this will enable them to maintain, rather than cut bed numbers, if this is needed.

- They say there will be an annual report based on a continuous review of bed numbers needed. How will the review be done?
- We consider that bed numbers need to be planned and projected well into the future, especially as Whipps Cross is to specialise in the care of older people.
- The number of over 65s in the catchment area is projected to grow by 25% within three years of the new hospital opening. We believe this warrants planning now for an actual *increase* in bed numbers.

The issue of flexibility:

- The size of the rebuild is not flexible; it's already outlined in the current planning application, before Waltham Forest Council. If this planning application goes ahead, the space for the new hospital is fixed, and cannot be expanded. The footprint for the new hospital is also fixed by the budget allowed by Central Government.
- So what important services, or spaces for staff learning, and for team and office space, would have to be cut, or moved off site, to make room for more beds? The Barts Summer 2021 newsletter, mentions the flexibility to convert office space into additional wards. Staff need office space, just as patients need beds.

The Margaret Centre: specialist palliative and end of life care

Barts say that, in response to local concerns, they are now working with St Joseph's Hospice in Hackney and the North East London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to "establish what an end-of-life care offer" "could look like in a way that could be delivered from the Margaret Centre." Of course we welcome this in principle, but there is little detail in Barts' statements and there are important questions still to be answered:

- Barts say they will look at whether the Margaret Centre will remain on the hospital site, or be re-provided elsewhere in Waltham Forest. When and how will this be decided?

- Are these plans intended to be permanent arrangements or interim until the new hospital is built?
- It appears that the North East London CCG will lead on the planning. Does this mean decision making about the future of the Margaret Centre now rests, ultimately, with the CCG?
- The CCG covers a vast area from Havering and Barking & Dagenham to Hackney. Health services across North East London have been underfunded for years, so will the re-provision have to compete for funding with other badly needed services across the area?
- Will people from across the Whipps Cross catchment – Redbridge, West Essex and Newham as well as Waltham Forest – all have the same right of access to the new service?
- What is the timing of these changes? Barts say they aim to begin implementation in 2022. How will staff at the Margaret Centre be involved?

We will urgently seek clarity from Barts on these issues. We believe it is vital to retain the Margaret Centre in its entirety as a local specialist NHS end of life and palliative care service. It must be free to all who need care, and accessible to everyone living in the Whipps Cross catchment area.

Other services:

- There is no mention by Barts of other services currently provided at Whipps Cross that are not in the design plans of the new hospital. In particular the **Outpatient Dialysis Service** and the **Connaught Day Hospital**, providing rehabilitation for older people.

All of this, notwithstanding Barts' assurances, give us cause for concern about what actually will be provided at the new Whipps Cross Hospital.

Our campaigning, and the representations to Barts made by our MPs, Redbridge Council and members of the public have clearly made a difference. But if we're to get the hospital we need there is still lots to do.

You can email us at whipps.cross.campaign@gmail.com