

# S. U. News

The newsletter for Ealing Service Users

## CNWL announces closure of the Max Glatt Unit

On 8<sup>th</sup> of September CNWL began a consultation exercise on their three options for the unit. The three options were:

### Option 1

Closure of the Max Glatt Unit with no additional provision for medically managed inpatient treatment for substance misusers.

### Option 2

Keep the Max Glatt Unit open with a sustainable funding strategy supported by commissioning bodies and others.

### Option 3

Closure of the Max Glatt Unit but explore with a voluntary sector independent sector agency, merging a medically managed service (using Max Glatt doctors and nurses) with an existing medically monitored unit for drug and alcohol problems with less complex needs.

The consultation ended on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November and on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December they issued the following statement.

Max Glatt is an exceptionally good unit that delivers brilliant clinical results; the staff are very skilled and patients speak very highly of the service. We are also the lowest priced NHS service of this kind in London.

However the service runs at a substantial loss. It has 15 beds and today has 5 patients.

We recognised this could not go on so ran a public consultation about its future which ended on 7 November.

All responses were published on our website at <http://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/news/max-glatt-consultation/>

We believe that only Options 1 (closure) and 2 (keep Max Glatt open with a sustainable funding strategy supported by commissioners and others) are viable.

Most responders opted for Option 2.

Option 3 requires a business proposition to be developed with the third sector. This could only happen with guaranteed short term funding for Max Glatt from commissioners (till the end of the financial year). Whilst happy to discuss this we don't think it is practical at all.

Forecast income for Max Glatt for 2014-15 is £1.22m and expenditure is £1.79m, making a projected loss of £573,000. This loss has to be made up by CNWL and we must limit this loss as quickly as possible as it threatens other services.

This is likely to worsen; there has been a reduction in referrals despite the Unit being open for business until any final decision is made.

We cannot cut costs any further as this will be unsafe.

There are always uses for bed space, *ad hoc*, so as a short term measure and on the basis of careful clinical assessment we will take other patients onto the unit in order to keep the detox beds open until the final decision is carefully made and suitable alternatives found in all cases.

However, it is not clinically feasible to merge this service with another – the clinical needs and risks are very different.

We cannot continue without an increase in our overnight bed price or a guaranteed income stream.

We will discuss this with the Commissioners of the service; an issue we need to confront jointly. It would be preferable if we could obtain emergency funding whilst discussions take place about the Unit's long-term future.

Without this funding, and given the low occupancy rate, we may need to take the steps to close the unit. If this was to occur we will ensure patients needing this specialist-type of inpatient care will receive it in the normal way from a suitable alternative provider.

The Max Glatt model of care is clinically successful but not financially viable.

Our options are very limited indeed; we are placed between a big rock and a very hard place. In the absence of any agreement around new funding it is with great sadness and a lot of disappointment we have to recommend the closure of this excellent Unit, the timing depending on whatever interim agreements can be

agreed.

**Mike Waddington**

CNWL Communications Director

This decision clearly has extremely serious consequences for service users who need to detox in a facility that can deal with their complex needs, so we asked Councillor Hitesh Tailor Cabinet Member for Health and Adults' Services what the closure would mean to service users in Ealing, this was his response.

I write in response to your request for a statement from the Council on its views on the closure of the Max Glatt Unit, and what provision it intends to make in the future for those residents in need of detoxification with complex medical needs.

The Max Glatt Unit has provided a high quality detoxification facility, catering for those with high levels of support need due to complex physical and emotional factors for some years. Ealing have been working closely with West London Colleagues in Brent, Hounslow, Hillingdon, Barnet and Harrow, as well as the Tri Borough (Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster) in co-ordinating the response to the CNWL consultation on the proposed closure, which, as you know, collectively supported 'option 2' – which was to keep the unit open with a review of financial contributions. We had asked the trust for further detail as to how we could support them so that as a group of commissioning boroughs, we could look at how this might work. Equally we asked the trust to consider alternative use for a section of the unit to provide some financial support. To date, we have had no feedback from the trust to our consultation responses.

We are still communicating closely with these local borough partners and await more formal communication from CNWL, which it has been indicated will be released in the New Year. In the meantime we would like to provide re-assurances that whilst it is with extreme disappointment and sadness that we anticipate the strong possibility that the unit will close, there are facilities which cater for individuals who need medically assisted detoxification from

substances which Ealing residents will have access to. Whilst these may be slightly further afield, we will work with RISE to provide escorts to facilities where this is needed, and also utilise the broad range of providers of medically assisted detoxification facilities to ensure that the needs of Ealing residents are met."

Cllr Hitesh Tailor

Although Cllr Tailors assurances are welcome Service Users should be aware that the Council will be making 42% cuts across all services in the 2015-16 financial year and these cuts will affect not only the residential detox budget but also the RISE contract. To what extent these cuts affect mainstream services such as prescribing, counselling and criminal justice work is unknown but it is likely that the cuts will fall hardest on the supportive services such as volunteering and peer mentoring, community engagement, employment, training and education, floating support and the Social Cafe.

If drug and alcohol services in Ealing are not going to fall from amongst the best in London to amongst the worst, some innovating thinking will be needed from Politicians, Commissioners, Providers and Service User organisations if services are to remain recognisable as those we enjoy today.

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