Extending patient choice – the services being considered

Introduction
We want to talk to local people about enabling patients who are referred for a service to choose from a range of qualified providers and select the one that they feel best meets their needs. You can find background information about this in the handout “Extending patient choice (Any qualified provider)”.

Engagement activity
Nationally eight community and mental health services have been selected. These services are:

- **Musculoskeletal services for back and neck pain:** Musculoskeletal is the term used to describe the system of muscles, skeleton and joints that help us move our bodies. The neck and back are part of the spine and help us with a range of movements like moving our head, standing and sitting. Services include physiotherapy. Patients can be referred by their GP for an assessment and treatment plan such as exercise classes or individual therapy. It may also include joint injection, hydrotherapy or preparation for an operation.

- **Adult hearing services in the community:** This includes assessment of hearing and fitting of hearing aids. It also includes repairs, replacement of batteries and sorting out minor problems with the aid.

- **Continence services (adults and children):** Adults who have a continence problem can get advice from the continence service or direct from GPs or practice nurses. For those who are house bound and cannot attend a clinic, the service is provided by their local district nursing team. The Children’s Continence Advisory Service is available for all children over the age of four years with bladder and bowel problems. The service undertakes an assessment of toileting readiness and tailors treatments for the child’s needs mainly in the home environment.

- **Direct access diagnostic tests:** This describes services which help doctors to diagnose health symptoms. It includes endoscopy, echocardiograms, ultra sounds, x-rays and MRI scans.

- **Podiatry services:** This is concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of foot health problems. The podiatrist is responsible for assessing and treating a wide range of conditions and ensuring that the most effective course of treatment is offered. It is not a nail cutting service.

- **Wheelchair services (children):** Experts in paediatric mobility assess all children and young people referred to the service and prescribe mobility equipment that takes account of their educational, social and clinical needs, enabling them to lead independent, full and active lives.
Leg ulcer and wound healing: There are usually between 70,000 and 190,000 people suffering from venous leg ulcers at any one time, and over half of these people have had their ulcer for over a year. Most people with leg ulcers experience pain, and this can be debilitating, leading to a loss of mobility, sleep and social isolation. The impact on quality of life is inestimable.

Primary care psychological therapies (adults) (‘talking therapies’): This is aimed at people with mild to moderate mental health issues and might include depression, anxiety, panic; sometimes this can be a reaction to life events such as redundancy, bereavement, occupational stress and adjusting to physical illness.

Locally we have identified the following services as priorities:

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<th>Buckinghamshire</th>
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<td>Adult hearing services in the community</td>
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<td>Direct Access diagnostics</td>
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<td>Continence</td>
<td>Podiatry</td>
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We want to find out your views on which of these service areas you think might benefit from offering an extended choice of provider and are asking whether you think the proposals will meet the demands of patients and deliver improvements in quality. Feedback from this engagement will help us to decide which local community and/or mental health services would benefit from offering an extended choice of provider. We are also asking you to let us know if you have other areas of NHS services you think would benefit.

Time scales
We will start to implement AQP for the selected services from April 2012 and this should be completed by September 2012.

Have your say
We would like to hear the views of local people and organisations about these changes. To give your views or for more information:

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For Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire residents to comment on line visit: http://bit.ly/extendingchoice. You will be asked to register before you can get all the information.