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# The 12 month period to test maternity services will start in April

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## The 12 month period to test maternity services will start in April

Posted on Wednesday 7th February 2018

The 12 month period for testing the ability to deliver consultant-led maternity services at the West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven will start in April.

The date was agreed by members of NHS North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) Governing Body.

The decision to agree Option 1 following the Healthcare For The Future public consultation was made on March 8 2017.

The decision was to support the delivery of consultant-led care at the West Cumberland Hospital with some mothers who may potentially have higher risk babies delivered at the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle, with plans to test the sustainability of the service over a 12 month period.

Since that decision was made the Working Together Steering Group (WTG) and other working groups have been set up involving the community, third sector, frontline health and care staff, as well as system leaders, to support the wider efforts to sustain the service through co-production.

An Independent Review Group (IRG) has been established. This is a panel made up of independent clinical experts chaired by Dr Bill Kirkup, which will assess progress over the 12 months.

Jon Rush, chair of the CCG, said: "It is already 11 months since we made the decision. There has been considerable work within the service to prepare for the implementation of Option 1 and a huge amount of work by the community to help tackle these long standing recruitment issues.

"But the challenges we faced have not gone away and the uncertainty is not helping this fragile service. The decision to start this 12 month period will allow some certainty.

"The CCG has always been - and remains - committed to doing everything possible to provide consultant-led services at Whitehaven."

Members of the Governing Body were keen to emphasise that this is not merely a stay of execution for the service. It is a timescale for the sustainability and safety of the service to be considered.

### Notes

#### What is co-production?

Co-production means 'working together' using the expertise and experience of patients, their families and carers, the community, the third sector, frontline NHS and care staff, as well as leaders, in developing and improving services.

The NHS in north Cumbria is committed to being more open and transparent about how we develop services and the challenges we face.

NHS North Cumbria CCG met at Botcherby Community Centre in Carlisle on Wednesday February 7 2018.

Details of the papers discussed can be found:

<http://www.northcumbriaccg.nhs.uk/about-us/how-we-make-decisions/Governing-Body-Meetings/2018/index.aspx>

The decisions made by NHS Cumbria CCG in March 2017 can be read here:  
<http://www.northcumbriaccg.nhs.uk/news/2017/March/healthcare-for-the-future-decisions.aspx>

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