

**PRESS RELEASE**

19.9.08

**£215 million proposals approved by local NHS**

Proposals to reshape local health services in Sutton and Merton at a cost of around £215 million have been approved by the Boards of Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust and Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust.

The proposals will now be submitted to NHS London, the strategic health authority. If the plans are given the go-ahead, there will be major investment in St Helier Hospital, four new 'local care centres', and investment in 'intermediate care' services for people who don't need to go to hospital or who need rehabilitation after a hospital stay.

Local resident Dee Szatmari is already treated by Sutton and Merton's intermediate care team. She says:

"It's much better being treated at home – because of my condition I don't have a strong immune system, so have to be segregated from other patients if I go to hospital. The intermediate care team do an excellent job and are very caring. I think expanding intermediate care services, and raising awareness of them, is a great idea. I'm sure that there are a many more people who could be treated in their own homes, preventing hospital admissions."

Chief Executive of the PCT Bill Gillespie said: "We have listened carefully to local people and they have made it clear they want more care provided closer to where they live. We believe these proposals will give Sutton and Merton residents a network of care that will provide much better treatment close to where they live, whilst enhancing and developing the services of an excellent local hospital.

Samantha Jones, Chief Executive of Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "These plans will help us to further improve the services that we give to local people, in particular making sure that they receive safe, high quality care in a clean and welcoming environment that is easy to access from their own homes."

A copy of the summary business case is available on the website:  
[www.betterhealthcare.org.uk](http://www.betterhealthcare.org.uk).

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**Note to editors**

CAPTION: The photo shows Stuart Clark, Intermediate Care Nurse, with local resident Dee Szatmari.

Dee had a stroke a few years ago, and also has an auto-immune disease. This leads to 'pleurisy' (bad chest infections), which is treated through antibiotics administered through a drip. She commented:

"When I get pleurisy, I get a referral to intermediate care from my doctor. The intermediate care team then come and visit me in my own home, which means that I don't have to go to hospital. They come in three times a day, and a night nurse visits at night, to give me antibiotics through a drip. The chest infection usually lasts 10 days to two weeks.

"Receiving treatment in my own home means I don't have to go to hospital. It's much better being treated at home – because of my condition I don't have a strong immune system, so have to be segregated from other patients if I go to hospital.

"The intermediate care team do an excellent job and are very caring. I think expanding intermediate care services, and raising awareness of them, is a great idea. I'm sure that there are a many more people who could be treated in their own homes, preventing hospital admissions."