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**Caring for those with a rare complex and lifelong disease**

**PRESS RELEASE** (for immediate release)

## **UK Behçets Syndrome Centres of Excellence announced**

The UK National Specialist Commissioning team announced on 22<sup>nd</sup> February that three Centres of Excellence for the diagnosis and treatment of Behçet's Disease will be commissioned in April 2012. The contract will be worth approximately £3.7 million per year over a 5 year period. The centres will be located at Bart's and the London Hospital, Birmingham City Hospital and at Aintree University Hospital in Liverpool. The centres will be led by Prof Farida Fortune in London, Dr Deva Situnayake in Birmingham and Prof Robert Moots in Liverpool. This follows a successful bid led by the Behçet's Syndrome Society in conjunction with the lead clinicians and teams representing each hospital.

The centres will provide a true 'one stop' clinic for patients with this chronic, rare disease. The illness affects several areas of the body, and the centres will provide clinicians from all the disciplines required to treat Behçet's including Rheumatology, Ophthalmology, Oral medicine and Gastroenterology. Standardised treatment pathways and drug regimes will ensure consistent treatment for patients and aim to improve patient's quality of life once diagnosed whilst reduce the diagnostic time for new patients which averages 12 years at present.

An important element of the contract is the centralisation of the drug budget for Behçet's patients. This will ensure equitable access to high cost drugs in a timely manner. The centres will also provide a platform to undertake research into the long term treatment of Behçet's patients in England.

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For details on Behçets disease visit [www.behçets.org.uk](http://www.behçets.org.uk)

National Specialised Commissioning visit [www.specialisedservices.nhs.uk/pages/view/nscg](http://www.specialisedservices.nhs.uk/pages/view/nscg)