

Agenda Item 7

		THE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LINCOLNSHIRE	
Boston Borough Council	East Lindsey District Council	City of Lincoln Council	Lincolnshire County Council
North Kesteven District Council	South Holland District Council	South Kesteven District Council	West Lindsey District Council

Your Health, Your Hospitals – Let’s Get Better Hospital Care **Consultation by NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board**

Response of the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire

Introduction

This document sets out the response of the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire to the consultation *Your Health, Your Hospitals – Let’s Get Better Hospital Care*, undertaken by the NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board. This response was approved by the Committee on 6 December 2023.

The Committee would like to record its thanks to representatives of the NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust who attended a meeting of the Committee on 8 November 2023, to present the consultation materials and respond to questions.

The Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire has noted the role of the Humber and Lincolnshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the statutory consultee on *Your Health, Your Hospitals – Let’s Get Better Hospital Care* for the purposes of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013. On this basis, this response is submitted by the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire as a non-statutory consultee for the purposes of these regulations.

The response is in three parts:

- A. Response to the Consultation Questions
- B. Other Comments
- C. Summary and Conclusion

A. Response to Consultation Questions

Questions 1-4

The Committee does not wish to use the 'tick-boxes' in response to questions 1 to 4, but has included a brief statement on each question. More details on the views of the Committee are found in the responses to questions 5 and 6.

Question 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree that NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board needs to make changes to respond to the challenges (as set out pages 4 – 5 of the consultation document)?

The Committee does not fully accept the rationale for change, and furthermore is not convinced by the proposals put forward. Please refer to the Committee's response to question 5.

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to keep most urgent and emergency care services for the majority of patients, at both Scunthorpe and Diana Princess of Wales Hospital in Grimsby?

Although the Committee accepts that most urgent and emergency care services for the majority of patients would remain at each hospital, it is not convinced by the proposals put forward. Please refer to the Committee's response to question 5.

Question 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to bring the four specific services (trauma unit, emergency surgery, paediatric (children's) and complex medical inpatient services at one hospital?

The Committee does not fully accept the rationale for change, and furthermore is not convinced by the proposals put forward. Please refer to the Committee's response to question 5.

Question 4

If the four specific services were brought together in one hospital, to what extent do you agree or disagree that this should be Diana Princess of Wales Hospital in Grimsby?

The Committee is aware that one of the key drivers in the proposal to consolidate these services at Diana Princess of Wales Hospital was the substantial capital funding required for improvements at Scunthorpe General Hospital. This is an example of the NHS providing a service within its available resources, rather than a better service, as factors such as staff availability and building costs are the key determinants.

Question 5

Please explain the reasons for your answers and tell us if you have particular concerns about:

- keeping most urgent and emergency care services on both hospitals;
- bringing the four specific services together at one hospital, including if you have specific concerns or comments about any particular service;
- the hospital site, where the four specific services are proposed to be brought together.

Heart Patients at Weekends

The Committee welcomes the fact that cardiology patients will receive an improved service, including at weekends, where patients attending Scunthorpe General Hospital would have access to cardiologists sooner than currently.

Step-Down Services

The Committee has been advised that step-down services for cardiology patients would be similar under the proposals to those for existing stroke patients. Essentially, local facilities, such as those in Lincolnshire, would be used where this was appropriate for patients to undertake rehabilitation, and this would be nearer to home, where possible.

Sharing Patient Records

The Committee would like to be re-assured that efforts will continue to ensure that patient records held by one part of the NHS remain or become accessible to other parts of the NHS, so that essential information about a patient is not lost or overlooked.

Waiting Lists

The Committee accepts that these proposals are likely to have minimal impact on waiting lists, as the proposals relate to urgent and emergency care, rather than elective care.

Impact on Neighbouring Trusts

The Committee is not convinced that these proposals will have limited impact on the services provided by neighbouring trusts. For this reason, the Committee intends to request monitoring information on their impact on United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust, in particular on its accident and emergency department.

NHS Planning Across the Greater Lincolnshire Area

The Committee recognises that for NHS purposes, Greater Lincolnshire has always been divided into two separate NHS regions, currently the North East and Yorkshire Region, and the Midlands Region. This approach has not always helped the overall planning for NHS services. For example, in 2014 there was a public consultation on proposals to consolidate hyperacute stroke services at Scunthorpe General Hospital, discontinuing these services at Diana Princess of Wales Hospital in Grimsby. These proposals were supported by the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire at that time, on the basis that this approach had been recommended in the 2013 Keogh Review of Urgent and Emergency Care, which highlighted a reduction in London from 32 to eight stroke units and improved patient outcomes as a result.

In 2021, there was a consultation to consolidate acute stroke services at Lincoln County Hospital, in effect reducing these services at Pilgrim Hospital Boston. This was not supported by the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire, but was approved by the former NHS Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group in May 2022; and as of December 2023, the decision continues to be implemented.

The effect of these two separate consultations is a movement of services away from the east coast to hospitals in the west of the county: in Lincoln and Scunthorpe. This remains a concern for the Committee. Although stroke services do not form part of this consultation, the Committee would like to record its view that the decisions on the proposals should take account the wider impacts on the NHS, across NHS regional boundaries, as well seeking workable solutions, not just fit for purpose for the next five to ten years, but for the next thirty to fifty years.

Again, although not the subject of this consultation, the Committee would also like to cite the use of the accident and emergency department at Diana Princess of Wales Hospital in Grimsby by residents in Lincolnshire, particularly on the east coast, including as far south as Skegness. This is another example of how changes to NHS services impact over NHS regional boundaries.

Question 6

Are there any particular groups or people that you believe might be positively or negatively affected by any of the possible changes to services being considered? If so, what groups are these and how might any positive impacts be enhanced or negative impacts reduced?

Use of Virtual Wards and Virtual Appointments

The Committee recognises that the proposals relate to trauma, emergency admissions overnight or for longer than three days, patients would continue to be seen in person.

The Committee would like to refer to initiatives such as virtual wards and virtual appointments, which are much wider than this consultation and form part of national policies for the NHS. The Committee would like to put on record its support for each patient to be treated in an appropriate way, including recognition that virtual appointments in several circumstances would not be appropriate. Furthermore, virtual treatments rely on patients having both accessible IT equipment and adequate broadband coverage in their areas, as well as the means to subscribe to a household broadband provider. Where patients are affected by the proposals, there is the potential for a negative impact on deprived communities.

Transport

The Committee recognises that the proposals relate to trauma, emergency admissions overnight or for longer than three days, and patients would often be transported to hospital by ambulance, rather than using personal or public transport. However, when patients are discharged, they will need transport. Thus, the Committee is concerned that many people in Gainsborough and the surrounding area, who currently use Scunthorpe General Hospital, do not have access to private transport, and rely on public transport will be adversely affected. This makes journeys from Diana Princess of Wales Hospital in Grimsby to Gainsborough area, both for patients and their friends and families, more difficult and expensive than existing journeys from Scunthorpe. This will have a negative impact on deprived communities.

The Committee understands that the high level transport action plan, which was included in the Pre-Consultation Business Case, would be developed into a series of actions for discussion with partners. The Committee looks forward to these actions forming part of a more detailed action plan in response to the transport issues. The Committee would like to be advised of progress with the detailed action plan for transport, and subsequently its implementation.

B. Other Comments from the Committee

Consultation Arrangements

The Committee would like to record its disappointment and concerns over the arrangements for the consultation events, and the extent to which these were adequate, as no event was initially planned in the administrative county of Lincolnshire. The Committee acknowledges that two events were subsequently arranged and took place in Lincolnshire: a community roadshow at Louth Library; and an exhibition event at Morton Village Hall, Morton. The Committee feels that the 'last-minute' arrangement of these two events may have limited the overall number of responses to the consultation from these areas, as individuals may have had questions, which might not have been answered in the consultation period. Furthermore, the Committee queries the extent to which these events engaged with the public, rather than simply provided an opportunity to circulate questionnaires and other information.

The Committee also suggested that a leaflet be delivered to every household in the affected areas drawing attention to the consultation. This was the approach taken by the former NHS Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group on its Lincolnshire Acute Services Review proposals in 2021. As above, the absence of a leaflet delivered to each household raises a question over the adequacy of the consultation.

The Committee is mindful of the specific health needs of armed forces veterans, and the duties, which are placed on commissioners and providers of NHS services. Further to the above, a leaflet delivered to each household in the affected area would include these groups.

C. Summary and Conclusion

The Committee acknowledges the case for change, but is not convinced by the rationale put forward in the consultation document and the Pre-Consultation Business Case for the proposed changes to hospital services at Scunthorpe General Hospital and Diana Princess of Wales Hospital in Grimsby. The Committee's concerns regarding transport and travel, and the likely impact on patients using neighbouring hospital trusts, as stated above, are key considerations in reaching this conclusion.

In the event of the proposals being implemented, the Committee would like to consider the details of the transport plan, and intends to review the impact of the changes on patients using the hospitals of neighbouring trusts, as well as those Lincolnshire patients treated at Scunthorpe General Hospital, and at Diana Princess of Wales Hospital in Grimsby.