

Agenda Item 4

		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

Report to	Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire
Date:	15 March 2023
Subject:	Chairman's Supplementary Announcements

1. Pre-Election Period for Elections on 4 May 2023

As you are all aware local government elections take place on 4 May 2023 for all seven district councils in Lincolnshire. Although as Chairman I have not been directly advised in writing, I understand that the NHS in Lincolnshire is now following national guidance, which states that during the pre-election period, there should be:

- no new announcements of policy or strategy;
- no announcements on large and/or contentious procurement contracts; and
- no participation by NHS representatives in debates and events that may be politically controversial, whether at national or local level.

The guidance also advises NHS staff to avoid attending events where they may be asked to respond to questions about policy or on matters of public controversy. This may mean NHS staff withdrawing from previously agreed engagements.

I had not expected the impact of the pre-election period on this particular meeting of the Committee. However, I understand that the NHS in Lincolnshire has concluded that the notice of election issued by two of the district councils (East Lindsey and West Lindsey) on 13 March 2023 represents the start date of the pre-election period. I have not been directly advised on this, but it has been confirmed by the following extract from the papers from the Board of Directors meeting of United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust on 7 March 2023, which stated:

“There are local government elections on 4 May 2023. As such the NHS will enter a pre-election period (also known as purdah) on 13 March 2023. This limits the actions and communication activities of the NHS during the run-up to an election, whilst ensuring that normal and essential operational business is still conducted.”

As a result of this, I would like to advise the Committee that there may be topics on today's agenda where our NHS contributors are not to be able to provide the level of detail which we would usually expect.

2. Information Requested at Previous Meetings

Information will be circulated on the following topics, when it is made available:

- United Lincolnshire Hospitals Use of the Independent Sector
- Lincolnshire's Second Community Diagnostic Centre

3. Temporary Closure of Hartsholme Centre – Male Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit – Engagement Feedback

A stakeholder briefing has been received from Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT), which is attached at Appendix A to these announcements.

The Committee will note that there is an intention from LPFT to attend the Committee's meeting on 17 May to provide a full update and a timetable for the future.



Stakeholder Briefing

Update Regarding Temporary Closure of Lincolnshire's Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit

Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT) took the urgent decision to temporarily close Lincolnshire's male psychiatric intensive care unit (PICU) on safety grounds in October 2022, following escalating concerns about staffing availability.

At the time of the temporary closure the unit had four male patients, who had plans in place to be discharged back to local acute wards, or who required a more secure setting. It took the Trust until November 2022 to make arrangements for the safe transition to alternative services, and the ward fully closed and redeployed the remaining staffing after this time.

It is important to remember the decision was not taken only because of concerns about staffing on the PICU unit, rather about staffing availability across all adult mental health wards in the county. The temporary closure of PICU allowed the Trust to redeploy the highly specialist PICU team to support staffing on the remaining wards and stabilise service provision. It also affected the least number of patients as the average admission rate for PICU was around five males at any one time.

Whilst the Trust had already received feedback from patients, carers and staff about current staffing levels, as soon as the decision was taken to temporarily close the unit, further engagement events were arranged to openly speak to patients, carers, staff and stakeholders about the impact of this decision. This was also an opportunity to ask about what additional support and arrangements needed to be in place during this time and what people felt was required to reopen the unit safely and sustainably.

Over the last four months, the Trust has undertaken a range of open public face to face and virtual engagement events, as well as targeted workshops with patients and staff. With further engagement now planned with staff over the next few weeks to understand the impact the temporary closure has had on their local service delivery.

The Trust has also met with all stakeholders from across the Lincolnshire health and care system to understand any unintended impact this has had on other services, and work together to understand what more the Trust could be doing to stabilise its available workforce.

Alongside this, the Trust has also been doing an in-depth review of its workforce planning and what the future pipeline of staff looks like. This has included a review of incoming international recruits, apprenticeships and newly qualified staffing and the timeline for these roles. In addition to increasing efforts on dedicated recruitment campaigns and looking at a range of different ways of working, including new roles.

Further work has also been undertaken on how the Trust could better retain its workforce on the wards, including looking at improved rostering to provide flexibility and work/life balance, development and training and ensuring the current workforce roles are benchmarked consistently against similar organisations.

Whilst the position has slightly improved since the temporary closure and the wards report a more settled and stable workforce availability, the workforce data would indicate that it remains unsafe from a clinical perspective to reopen the unit at this stage.

From the engagement to date, the Trust is not aware of any adverse impact on other services following the temporary closure, with the exception of more support required to the Trust's male acute ward in Lincoln which has seen a small rise in violence and aggression incidents. The Trust is currently investigating if this was as a consequence of the temporary closure, or a small number of male patients admitted with complex needs who would not otherwise met the requirements of a PICU.

Anyone requiring and meeting the thresholds for PICU care have been referred to out of county support, and since the closure this has happened in two cases. The Trust's bed management team is in regular contact with these patients to ensure they return to Lincolnshire services as soon as their presenting need reduced.

Further work is on-going to finalise a realistic timeline for reopening, whether this is on a phased basis, or full ward capacity. The Trust hopes to have this work completed no later than May 2023. However, continues to closely monitor current staffing levels and should this position improve significantly during this time, will move quickly to reopen the unit sooner.

The Trust and local commissioners, NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board will return to the Health Scrutiny Committee on 17 May 2023 to provide a full update and final projected timelines.

LPFT and NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board are committed to continuing to deliver PICU services in Lincolnshire and have the continued ambition to also deliver a service for females in the future.

The Trust continues to welcome feedback from patients, carers, stakeholders and public should they have any feedback about the temporary closure, please email: lpft.involvement@nhs.net