

Dr Sarah Wollaston MP



CONSTITUENCY NEWSLETTER

January 2017

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I thought you might like to hear an update on the progress of the local consultation on community services and how you can contribute to the next stages.

At the end of this email I have also included a link to my article in this week's British Medical Journal on the severe pressures across health and social care and an update on my work on this as chair of the Health Select Committee.

First, many thanks to the staff and volunteers from Torbay Healthwatch who coordinated the public response to the South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) consultation on reshaping community services. Their report has just been published by the CCG <http://healthwatchtorbay.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/CCG-NMOC-Consultation-Report-FINAL-VERSION-v8.pdf>

There is understandable scepticism about whether consultations are a genuine process designed to allow rubber stamping of decisions or whether they result in changes as a result of public opinions.

Of all the proposals to remodel the way that care is delivered, it is clear that locally the most controversial have been the proposed closures of Paignton and Dartmouth hospitals as well as the potential loss of Minor Injuries Units (MIU) with X-ray facilities from these centres as well as Brixham. This would mean that the nearest X-ray facilities would be at Totnes MIU or entail a trip to Torbay hospital and there are concerns about the difficulties especially for those relying on poor public transport links and for everyone as a result of congested roads especially during peak times and over the summer.

The CCG is now considering the consultation responses set out by Healthwatch and this week will be examining the many alternative proposals put forward during the consultation and summarised on page 38 of the report.

Following this evaluation meeting, the CCG will be publishing their recommendations on Friday 20th January. The Governing body will then be meeting in public on January 26th at 10am.

The Governing Body is a meeting in public and not a public meeting and so members of the public or staff who wish to attend will not be able to participate in any discussion but I'm told that time will be allocated at the beginning of the meeting for members of the public to ask questions. The maximum amount of time available for anyone to speak is three minutes. Where possible, a response will be given to questions at the meeting, unless further information is required. Responses in that instance will be given in writing within two working weeks following the Governing Body meeting. Anyone wanting to speak must submit a written question to the corporate affairs team by 5 pm on Tuesday 24 January - using the email address corporate.sdtccg@nhs.net or in writing to Pomona House, Torquay, TQ2 7FF

I am hoping to attend the meeting to raise my concerns about social care provision locally, which has also been made clear by the CQC decision to place Mears, our prime social care provider, in special measures. I have also been raising these concerns at national level about the financial and staffing pressures on social care and the impact this having upon vulnerable people and the ability of NHS services to cope. At a time when beds in both the community and our hospitals are already under intense pressure, we need to have a clear plan for how care will be provided for those who cannot be cared for at home even with extra support.

It is clear that no closures can go ahead without a clear alternative which provides better care, and guaranteed for the long term. There needs to be further detail about how rehabilitation or intermediate care beds will be commissioned and about how money will be found to support the building or redesign of new facilities before any closures go ahead. Whilst there is an alternative proposal for Dartmouth, that is not the case for Paignton and that is not acceptable.

My preference would be to retain at least one further MIU but the consultation set out the difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled staff and the difficulties created when X-ray facilities are not reliably in operation as a result of a workforce shortfall.

The financial pressures were set out in the consultation document, with the CCG facing a gap of £142m by 2020/21 if no action is taken. This will not however be primarily addressed by the proposals which will save only £1.4m as savings are reinvested in alternatives designed to help cope with rising demand for health and care services and provide care closer to home for more people.

One of the greatest threats to this is the serious shortage of staff across health and social care and in my view we need far greater emphasis on how the CCG and council will be supporting the training and retention of the teams that will be essential to care for people across South Devon.

On a final note, I am very concerned to hear that the financial pressures are so great that Torbay Hospital is proposing to withdraw from their ground-breaking Integrated Care Organisation next year. I will be raising this in Parliament and at the public meeting as this risks undermining the efforts to bring health and social care closer together as well as the ability to deliver the proposed new models of care.

You may be interested to see my recent piece in the British Medical Journal on the need for cross party working to find a new settlement for properly funding health and social care <http://www.bmj.com/content/356/bmj.j5>

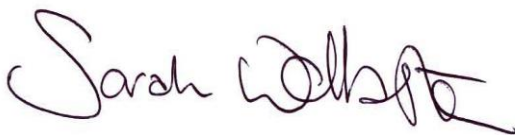
As chair of the Health Select Committee, I have also written to the Prime Minister alongside the Chairs of the Public Accounts Committee and the Communities and Local Government Committee.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmcomloc/170106-Letter-to-Prime-Minister-on-social-care-and-NHS.pdf>

I have also met with both the Chancellor and PM to discuss these pressures and the need for urgent action. My letter to the Chancellor prior to the Autumn Statement set out my concerns following on from the committee's inquiry into NHS and social care finances

<https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/Health/Correspondence/2016-17/chair-to-chancellor-NHS-funding-26-10-2016.pdf>

With best wishes for the New Year,



There are several ways to keep up to date with the work I have been doing, you can follow me on twitter [@sarahwollaston](https://twitter.com/sarahwollaston) or via my [website](#) or [facebook page](#) which are kept constantly updated, showing a diary of my constituency activities, links to my speeches in Parliament, my personal blogs and responses to campaigns. You can also email me at sarah.wollaston.mp@parliament.uk