



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Susan Symington
Chair, York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Trust Headquarters, The York Hospital
Wigginton Road
York YO31 8HE

26th March 2019

Dear Sue,

I wish to raise a number of questions with you, under various headings, regarding the current and future provision of healthcare services in Scarborough that affect Thirsk and Malton residents and those of two neighbouring constituencies. They cover a total population of approximately 250,000 according to your CEO, Mike Proctor, which exceeds the City of York, but who nevertheless receive an increasingly limited service compared to York residents. As a basic principle, it cannot be right that residents of rural areas or smaller urban settlements have inferior access to services. We must deliver a system that is fair and equitable to all, even if that means the delivery of like-for-like cost of care is more expensive in places such as Ryedale and Scarborough.

Equality of Access:

The present configuration of services appears to have an unacceptable bias towards York. This results in considerable, expensive and time consuming journeys to York even for the most brief and routine appointments or to visit relatives. The present situation which now often requires expensive day long round trip journeys, often on public transport and even involving overnight hotel accommodation for some, is not acceptable.

For example, one of my constituents, who is a pensioner, lives in Hunmanby and recently had to attend the eye clinic at York Hospital. Only local York transport to the hospital was mentioned in the letter he received about his appointment. The letter also stated that he was not to drive as eye drops may be administered. Due to the time of the appointment and problems with local transport from such a distance an overnight stay in a hotel was necessary. He and his wife therefore had to spend the night in a hotel in York, which is a city they are unfamiliar with; this compounded the amount of stress that they experienced. Furthermore, subsequent appointments were also scheduled for York often for a short consultation, which could surely have been made locally.

- 1. Please will you tell me how you propose to meet your statutory obligations for equality of access?*

Staff shortages and recruitment.:

There are shortages of staff across the NHS, but significant evidence locally of job insecurity following several years of downgrades, transfers, closures and cuts. It has been suggested that the management and HR culture imposed, frequently referred to by staff as bullying, have significantly compounded the problems. Even the supposedly NHS Guardian, funded by NHS England has now been made directly accountable to your CEO. In Mike Proctor's letter to me he states that it is "Hull's recruitment problems that have precipitated events". That will be of no comfort whatsoever to those who have to travel unacceptable distances to access treatment. They consider the NHS to be a single organisation that at least attempts to operate in a joined up way.

2. *Please will you provide me with details of your recruitment strategy to urgently address shortages?*
3. *Please provide me with details of your strategy to urgently improve the job security and morale of local healthcare staff and reduce the pressure on them.*

Scarborough review:

In October 2018, you commissioned a private company to undertake a review into Scarborough Hospital and local services, which was completed in December. A similar review was not undertaken into York Hospital and absolutely no information has been provided to local people since completion.

4. *Please provide me with the original scope of the review given to the consultancy firm.*
5. *Please provide me with the details of that review and its findings.*
6. *Please explain to me why if "sustainability" was the objective, the review was not trust-wide.*

Future healthcare provision:

Since York Trust took responsibility for healthcare services on the East Coast, there has been a significant diminution in the provision of services and continuing uncertainty about the future. You have recently published a 5-year plan that is very short on detail.

7. *Please will you provide me with a detailed list of services provided at each of the following hospitals, Malton, Scarborough, Bridlington, and Whitby, which were being offered at the time of your acquisition?*
8. *Please will you provide me with a detailed list of those services for those same hospitals which you will be offering, in 5-years' time?*
9. *Please will you provide me with a list of services removed from York Hospital since you assumed control of Scarborough services?*

Consultations and "engagements":

Public consultations by York Trust and CCGs seem designed to obtain results to justify their continuing service reductions, closures and transfers. The clearest example was the "public consultation" conducted by the Scarborough and Ryedale CCG which, with no advance publicity other than on their own website, you asked 12 leading questions. The first question was "would you be prepared to travel further for better health outcomes" but with absolutely no other information about outcomes. As a result of that, you published your "Vision for the Future" and stated that "76% of the public are happy to travel further for better health outcomes". That has resulted in some of the unsatisfactorily long journeys some of my constituents now have to make for even the most routine appointments.

10. *Please provide me with reassurances and your detailed strategy to ensure any future plans are fully transparent and available for constituents to properly consider.*

Patient welfare and safety:

I understand that one death is being investigated following a transfer of a patient from Scarborough to York and then to Hull for a treatment that was previously available in Scarborough.

11. Please can you inform me of the current safeguards you put in place when you make decisions about future service provision which may result in adverse consequences including deaths?
12. Please can you inform me what steps you are taking to ensure that consultant medical staff meet their contractual obligations across the whole trust catchment area and that future contracts will confirm that requirement?

Oncology:

In a briefing dated 21st February it was confirmed that a decision had been taken to centralise the breast oncology outpatient service to York Hospital. This will make matters much worse. As many as 665 breast oncology patients attend Scarborough Hospital per year and my constituents are now required to travel to York. This is entirely unacceptable.

One of my constituents wrote to me to say *"My husband had surgery for bowel cancer last November and even now 4 months later he cannot sit properly, even with the support of cushions. His surgery took over 10 hours and a large proportion of his bowel was removed. He has had already completed two rounds of Chemo and will be starting his third starting this week. We opted to use the mobile unit at Malton as it is closer to our home which makes it easier for him to travel to the unit, 20 minutes of very uncomfortable travel in a car compared to the 40 minutes plus walking time to the Scarborough Unit.*

"All of his outpatients appointments are also at Scarborough, which he endured without grumbling although I can see the continuous pain and discomfort he is in.

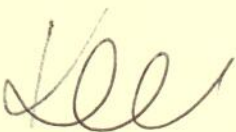
"For him to travel to York for his oncology appointments will be excruciating for him, 60 plus minutes sitting in a car when he CANNOT sit!!!! I find this totally disgusting, not only is he still having daily visits from a nurse because one of his wounds still has not healed and then struggle to get to Scarborough for appointments you now expect him to get to York for his oncology appointments."

I note the usual excuse is recruitment problems and Mr Proctor has made this statement. *"We're just trying to do the best we can with the resources that we have available. If we could provide a service at Scarborough Hospital, then I promise you, we would provide it and we haven't given up on that. We hope to be able to restore that sometime in the future but that depends on our ability to recruit sufficient doctors in this specialty."*

13. In view of that, I would like an explanation of why your advertisement for a consultant, placed on the 22nd January 2019, only requires the successful applicant to cover York and Harrogate?
14. What other plans have you put in place to recruit consultants for Scarborough?

I appreciate that you have managerial changes currently taking place and probably have more to come, but the matters I raise are urgent and so I will look forward to your detailed reply as soon as possible. In the meantime, I have requested a meeting with the Health Secretary to highlight my concerns.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Hollinrake MP