
Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Relocation of Outpatient Clinics from Handforth Clinic

Final Briefing note on outcome of public consultation and presentation to East Cheshire NHS Trust Board

1 Public Consultation

In July 2017 East Cheshire Trust entered a public consultation process to ensure it fully understood the concerns and issues about the proposed changes. This was as per the agreement with Cheshire East Council's Health and Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) at its June meeting. The consultation period commenced 24 July 2017 and closed on 03 September 2017.

East Cheshire Trust (ECT) through its communication team has engaged with local councillors and the local patient participation group in order to agree the best approach to engage with the local population.

1.1 Process

A consultation document was drawn up which outlined the key issues and context. At the conclusion of the existing lease agreement the Trust would need to transfer a number of Consultant led Outpatient Services from Handforth Health Centre. It also described the Trust's proposed course of action. The consultation document invited the submission of general comments and observations.

Copies of the consultation document were delivered and posted to relevant locations, including Handforth Clinic, Handforth Health Centre (GP Surgery) and the nearby library and pharmacy. Posters describing the consultation were displayed through the Handforth Health Centre and Clinic. The consultation was promoted via a press release issued to the local media and social media channels operated by the Trust and partner organisations.

The Trust carried out several face-to-face engagement visits to the site, encouraging patients and visitors to complete consultation submissions. The proposals were also discussed with the Trust's Patient Reference Group.

Respondents were able to submit their views by two methods, via a form on the Trust's website or via paper.

1.2 Responses

In total 19 paper responses to the consultation were received by the trust and 69 responses were submitted via the trust's website, making a total of 88. The findings from these responses can be seen in the table in the section below.

A written response was received from Handforth Parish Council which is attached in Appendix 1. This is critical of the Trust's proposals, mainly focussing on questioning rental cost arrangements and space utilisation. As previously described the funding arrangements were complex. The lease between the GP Partners and NHS Property Services has been historically set on a "peppercorn" rent and were due to end in two phases of May and October 2017. It has been agreed by all parties involved that these leases will continue until October 2017 and now end together.

1.3 Themes

The main themes which emerged from responses to the document were as below:

| Issue | Details | Particularly affects | Health Sector Responses |
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| Transport | A number of respondents felt the proposals should not be implemented because of poor public transport services between Handforth and the trust's Macclesfield, Congleton and Knutsford sites. Bus services are said to be infrequent and train links highly impractical. Time, cost and inconvenience were cited as key factors. Challenges finding parking spaces at MDGH were also mentioned frequently and a Cheshire East Council consultation on proposed reductions to some bus services was referred to often. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elderly patients• People with disabilities• People on lower incomes without private transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A limited local survey highlighted a very small proportion of people were using public transport to access services (approx. 5%)• There are alternative services to East Cheshire Trust in the area should patients decide to express this choice |
| Capacity/increasing population | <p>It was cited that a large volume of new homes are to be built in and around Handforth and so this will lead to increased patient numbers.</p> <p>Questions were raised over the ability of clinics to be delivered at neighbouring trust sites without a corresponding increase in waiting times, both for appointments to be made and 'on the day' waits.</p> | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The proposal protects delivery of community services in the local area.• The Trust understand the landlord intends utilising some of the released space for delivery of Primary Care• An assessment was undertaken of the capacity at other ECT sites and concluded that there are sufficient slots available to re-provide services and not have a detrimental impact on waiting times |

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| De-localisation of services | Many respondents queried why services were apparently being centralised and taken away from a community venue against the trust/Caring Together's stated aim of providing more care in community venues/patients' own homes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elderly patients • People with disabilities • People on lower incomes without private transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal affects the delivery of consultant outpatient services but protects delivery of community services in the local area. |
| Quality of services | Several responses praised the efficiency and quality of outpatient clinic provided at Handforth and claimed a similar level would not be provided at alternative sites. | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no expected reduction in the quality of reception, assessment or treatment provision at the new locations • Diagnostics availability is greater at the transfer locations, resulting in reduced number of patient visits and hence improved quality |

The general response from the public (including staff) was to leave the services as they currently are, and for the trust to accept that it should incur an increase in cost.

2 Out-patient services at Handforth Health Centre – CEO presentation to ECT Trust Board Public meeting 29 September 2017

Due to a change at national level in the way rental payments are calculated the Trust faced an increase in costs for the provision of services at Handforth. Given the challenging financial position faced by the Trust, and wider health economy, a decision was needed as to either relocating services to other premises or reducing service expenditure elsewhere in the Trust to enable the services to continue at Handforth.

ECT Board documents for September included the paper which was shared with OSC in June; this gave the Board a fuller background to the issue which proposes to transfer outpatient clinics but retain community services at Handforth. It was confirmed to Board that the Trust had embarked on a public consultation during the period 24 July to 03 September 2017.

The Board were informed of the summary position:

- c.2,700 appointments per annum are provided at the health centre for outpatient services (c.475 individual patients). This represents c.50 patients/week or 10 per weekday.
- 50% of these patients live in Handforth (SK9 postcode) with others travelling from other areas.
- We would wish for patients to remain under our care; however other NHS Providers offer similar services, meaning that care could be received from within 2 miles from Handforth and up to 9 miles if they travel to Macclesfield.
- Transport was raised as a concern and a sample of 48 patients attending the health centre showed 42 travelled by car and only 2 had used public transport (1 of whom was from outside of Cheshire East). It is recognised that travel to Macclesfield will increase pressure on car parking availability. Some patients may choose alternative providers in

the Wilmslow and South Manchester locality, where travel time and parking may be less of a concern.

- A quality impact assessment has been undertaken.

It was confirmed to Board that the ECT Executive team recognised:

- the desire of the public to maintain the status quo in terms of service provision
- is pleased that a solution has been found with the building Landlord to retain sufficient space to be able to continue to provide community services from the health centre
- recognises the impact on individuals however the total volume of patients affected is relatively small when looking at overall outpatient services
- recognises the impact in terms of travel on individuals however takes notice of the vast majority of patients currently travel by car and for most services have local alternatives in addition to Macclesfield
- there is no impact on staff numbers whilst recognising that some staff may have increased travel
- confirms the ability to accommodate the activity at other locations without increased cost
- is unable to identify further savings to offset the £65,000 increased cost in continuing to provide the current level of service.

In summary East Cheshire Trust Board supported the recommendation from the Executive Team to transfer the consultant led outpatient services from Handforth to other ECT locations.

Neil Evans
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04 October 2017

Appendix 1 – Handforth Parish Council submission



Handforth Parish
Council submission to

Appendix 2 – Response to questions from Health and Social Care and Communities OSC July 2017



Handforth briefing
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