

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department for Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
WS1A 2NS

My Ref: PA / TK 004 Your Ref:

Date: 11 January 2017

Dear



Proposals to close the wards at Bradwell Hospital
Referral to Secretary of State

On the 7 November 2016, the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee resolved to refer, to the Secretary of State, a decision by the North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to temporarily close wards at Bradwell Hospital and the intention as part of a programme entitled 'My Care My Way' to consult in early 2017 on a permanent closure. This referral is made pursuant to regulation 23(9) of the Local authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny Regulations 2013.

- The Committees decision does not and never was intended to impugn the motives of the CCG's Chief Executive. The Committee saw clearly the reason for his decision, but this did not make it the right decision.
- The bed numbers in North Staffs are higher than the national average because of need, because of morbidity as a legacy of hard work in coal mines and steel making for men and pottery making for men and women. This labour was often accompanied by a lifestyle that we today call unhealthy but which was normal at the time.
- The Chairman of the acute trust had told the committee that, in common with all acute trusts, he was seeking to make better use of acute beds by early discharge of patients.
- The Committee understands that some, but by no means all, acute patients can safely be returned home, but many will benefit from step down care in the beds provided by, for example, Bradwell Hospital.



- The Chief Executive of the CCG agreed that there were slender resources available to provide community nursing and social care and in particular North Staffs suffered a noticeable shortage of GPs.
- The Committee felt that to fail to provide step down care would lead to patients with more dependency than otherwise would be the case and thus place a greater burden on community services.
- The Committee therefore concluded that the decision to close the beds at Bradwell was founded on a misleading statistic, did not take sufficiently into consideration the morbidity issues within the area and would inflict severe stress on already strained community services. As the decision would inevitably have an impact on the acute sector and the community sector as well as neighbouring CCGs, the Committee concluded that the decision would benefit from being considered at the Secretary of State level.

The referral is made following the Committee's consideration of the proposals at their meeting with the Accountable Officer of the Clinical Commissioning Group and the key concerns are detailed below.

The Committee's referral is based on a cross part unanimous decision.

In addition, the County Council at its meeting on 8 December 2016 considered a petition in relation to Community Care beds and resolved the following motion:

"The Council thanks the petitioners and accept it. The proposed closure of community beds petition is sent to the UHNM Trust responsible for Community Beds for their consideration and when I refer this to the Secretary of State for Health, I will enclose the petition.


This Council calls on the NHS to close no community hospital beds until there is evidence that alternative, quality, safe and sustainable care exists within our communities."

A copy of the petition is enclosed.

Yours sincerely



Philip Atkins, OBE
Leader of the Council



Kath Perry
Chairman
Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee