

Mr. Bryan Turner
Chairman
Health and Adult Social Care Select
Committee, WSCC

Trust Headquarters
J3, Jevington Building
Elm Grove
Brighton General Hospital
Brighton
BN2 3EW

Sent via email

Telephone: 01273 265930
Email: siobhan.melia@nhs.net

20th December 2018

Dear Bryan,

Thank you for your letter of 26th November 2018 regarding Matt Hancock's comments about the future of Community Hospitals. I have shared your letter with our Executive Team and had time to reflect on Matt Hancock's comments.

Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust is committed to providing high quality care close to where people live and we understand the passion with which communities value their local health facilities.

We believe that Mr. Hancock was referring to District General Hospitals (e.g. Worthing and St Richard's Hospitals in West Sussex) when he was explaining that these community hospitals should not be merged or shut down.

Our recent discussions have been about the sustainability and purpose of what you may call 'cottage hospitals'. These hospitals have one or two wards with relatively low numbers of patients being cared for, in isolated units. These cottage hospitals tend to only offer a small number of services and we therefore find it hard to attract staff to come and work in smaller units with little on-site senior support.

Your letter has alerted us to the need to be very clear with our terminology when describing our local health care facilities.

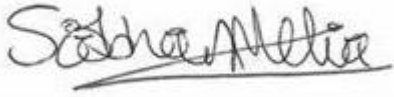
So, in answer to your question, we are aligned with Matt Hancock's view that merging or closing community hospitals (referring to District General Hospitals) is not always the solution to local health needs. We continue to believe that there is a need to review the sustainability of 'cottage hospitals' to ensure we maintain patient safety and deliver good care.

We look forward to continuing to work with the CCGs, local health and social care providers, patient groups, voluntary organisations and the HASC in reviewing how to best support communities in West Sussex.



Excellent care at the heart of the community

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Siobhan Melia". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Siobhan Melia
Chief Executive
Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust

