

Cllr Bryan Turner
Chairman
HASC
West Sussex County Council
County Hall
Chichester
PO19 1RG

Special Care Dentistry
Head Office
Haywards Heath Health Centre
Heath Road
Haywards Heath
RH16 3BB

30 January 2019

Dear Cllr Bryan Turner

Proposal to relocate Special Care Dentistry from Littlehampton Health Centre

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the HASC Select Committee on the 15th November 2018 to discuss the option of relocating the Special Care Dentistry Service delivered in Littlehampton to other sites, to mitigate a number of risks and challenges. As requested, we are writing to report on the outcome following completion of the consultation.

The closure was suggested as a possibility following staffing capacity issues, decontamination failing to meet national standards, and lack of access and treatment options for vulnerable patients. Consultation papers highlighted the issues and the options available to service users (as presented to the HASC Select Committee on 15th November 2018).

The consultation included a number of stakeholders: staff, patients, carers, organisations supporting clients who may access the service, as well as local NHS dentists. The stages of the engagement plan and consultation are detailed below:

- 22nd October 2018 – Consultation paper and covering letter sent to service users (patients, parents and carers) and stakeholders including West Sussex HASC, NHS England, West Sussex Healthwatch, Local Dental Committee, Local Professional Network and local MP's. Email (including consultation papers) sent to all Dental staff.
- Throughout this period clinical staff from Littlehampton had face to face or telephone conversations with retained patients with specific vulnerabilities, and those with concerns, to discuss options for their on-going care.
- 2nd November 2018 – Care groups and organisations supporting special needs patients contacted, details of consultation sent to 'Independent Lives'. Messages left for other groups to invite comment including My Network, Worthing & Littlehampton, Supporting Independence, Carers Support, Egalite, Enable Me project and Grace Eyre Foundation.
- 13th November – Article regarding the proposed closure appeared in the Littlehampton Gazette, notifying local residents.
- 15th November 2018 – Senior Service Managers invited to attend HASC Select Committee.
- 12th December 2018 – Staff meeting held with staff involved in the change and Service Management team members.



- 24th December 2018 – Consultation paper and accompanying letter sent to Littlehampton dental practices.
- 16th January 2019 – Consultation closed.

Feedback from the consultation

Out of the 92 service users accessing this clinic for their dental care, only 7 contacted service managers with their concerns or preferred alternative dental clinic from the options provided (Central Clinic, Worthing or Jubilee Dental Centre (JDC), Chichester). Of these 7 service users, 4 wanted to express their preference for Worthing or Chichester as an alternative dental clinic.

One parent of a child with severe learning disabilities expressed concern about the additional journey time and mentioned transferring care to their family General Dental Practitioner (GDP). We offered a shared care arrangement or domiciliary visits depending on the best interest of the patient. They chose to relocate to Central Clinic, Worthing under the care of Special Care Dental Service (SCDS).

Another patient had support from the Grace Eyre Foundation to express their concern about further travel as they currently use public transport to get to Littlehampton. The dental team felt this patient could be maintained by their local GDP with more complex treatment being shared with the SCDS team and this was offered to the patient. They chose to register with their local GDP.

Another parent of an autistic child expressed disappointment at having to adjust their child to a new setting, especially if this was a hospital setting (JDC is situated within St. Richard Hospital in a separate unit). He was reassured that care could be transferred to the Central Clinic, Worthing (another health centre) with the same staff initially on hand to support his child to the new setting.

NHS England have expressed a preference for moving away from single surgery clinics and they have required assurance from us that services can be maintained at the alternative locations, which currently they can.

Decision

Following extensive discussion, addressing all raised concerns and agreeing mutually acceptable outcomes, as well as final approval from NHS England at a meeting held on 23 January 2019, a decision has been made to move the existing 92 patients currently seen at Littlehampton to either Central Clinic, Worthing or Jubilee Dental Centre, Chichester, depending on their home location and preferred option (where applicable) from the first week of February 2019.

Additional provision has been made with dentists, increasing their clinics at both new locations to support patients transferred from Littlehampton.

Please feel free to contact myself if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely



Lloyd Barker

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