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COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

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Your ref: P-03-85

15 December 2011

Mr William Powell AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Dear Mr Powell

**Re: P-03-85 Surgeries in Flint**

Thank you for your letter of 23 November last. The Betsi Cadwaladr Community Health Council (BCCHC) welcomes the opportunity to give our views on the content of the petition.

We feel it would be useful, however, to provide some background since the original petition was lodged in 2007.

You will be aware that Community Health Councils in Wales were reconfigured in April 2010. This reconfiguration dissolved the former six CHCs in North Wales and established the single BCCHC. In 2007, Flintshire formed part of the Clwyd CHC. Our response is therefore based on documentation from the Clwyd CHC archive and current information acquired during CHC monitoring visits to the practices concerned and from patient feedback passed to CHC members based in the Flintshire locality.

During 2004/05 Flintshire Local Health Board undertook a review of community hospital and primary care services in Flint (which included the three GP practices of the Laurels, Eyton Place and Allt Goch with a combined list of some 14,000-15,000 registered patients) with involvement of all stakeholders including the CHC. Following the review, the health board undertook a consultation on a proposed service model for Flint with two options, both of which proposed a new build integrated primary and community resource centre either in a central location in Flint or on the existing Flint hospital site.

During the review and consultation period, Clwyd CHC actively sought the views on the proposals from the public, patients and other stakeholders in the Flint catchment via public meetings, listening events and a questionnaire. Clwyd CHC's response to the consultation and pertinent appendices are enclosed for information.

The issues of provision of the primary care resource centre and the future of Flint Community Hospital were inextricably linked throughout the process. In the response to the consultation Clwyd CHC felt that the two proposals should have been divorced and undertaken as separate consultations.

Although the issue of closure of the Flint Community Hospital was at the forefront of the feedback to the consultation, there was recognition of a need for change to the delivery of primary care in Flint and a good support for the proposal of a primary and community resource centre.

Members of the Committee may recall the various consultations on changes to NHS services throughout Wales and the strength of feeling voiced by the public that ensued. Subsequently proposed changes, particularly to primary and community care, were not taken forward.

The BCCHC has not undertaken any consultation since 2007 surrounding the current GP practices in Flint but has been actively engaged. CHC members from the Flintshire locality and the practice manager of the Laurels surgery have advised that the inadequacies of the three premises as noted in previous CHC engagement activity and from CHC monitoring visits to the practices, are still very much apparent. The development of a primary resource centre – in a central location in Flint - is supported by patients of the practices. We are aware that the petition continues to generate support sporadically and is still considered 'live'.

We further understand that discussions between the Laurels Surgery and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board have been ongoing but there appears to be something of a stalemate as regards the availability of funding for any such development and a question of who should fund the appointment of further GPs and associated personnel.

The BCCHC is currently awaiting an update from the health board on the overall situation regarding any development of the practices and will advise the Petitions Committee further once received.

Yours sincerely



Pat Billingham (Mrs)  
Chief Officer

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## CLWYD COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE FLINTSHIRE LOCAL HEALTH BOARD'S CONSULTATION ON THE MODERNISING AND IMPROVING OF HEALTH SERVICES IN FLINT, INCLUDING FLINT COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

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The vision described in *Designed for North Wales* and in *Designed for Life* sees more and more services being transferred from the acute setting into the community. A successful move of services from the acute hospitals to the community relies on the availability of good, appropriate, community facilities which will enable individuals to live with confidence in their own community and an infrastructure that would be adaptable to the transfer of more and more services from the acute setting to the community as technology advances and the population of Flint increases.

Currently, the people of Flint receive their primary care and community care from three GP practices, Borough Grove Clinic and Flint Community Hospital, all of which require refurbishment and modernisation. Advances in the treatment of patients in primary care have progressed considerably and the current care providers have no capacity to expand to provide any new services.

The population of Flint is increasing, with consent having been given for the build of approximately 900 new houses. This will impact greatly on primary care services, especially GPs who are currently working to capacity. We have been advised that some of the GPs in Flint are unable to accept any new patients and existing patients are complaining that they have difficulty in getting an appointment to see their doctor.

The review of the *Community Hospital and Primary Care Services in Flint* undertaken by Tribal Secta in 2005 (to be referred to from here on as the Tribal Secta Review) advised that primary and community health care services should be integrated to enable them to provide the most effective and efficient care and their recommendation was that those services would be best provided on a single site.

There were 9 options for delivering primary care short listed and each was awarded scores against the benefit criteria by participating stakeholders. The Integrated Community Hospital and Primary Care Centre at a central location in Flint came out as the clear, preferred choice with 886 points. This is the option that Clwyd Community Health Council would have fully supported, but this option was disregarded by Flintshire Local Health Board and the two options which were chosen for public consultation were:

### **Option 1:**

New Build Integrated Primary and Community Resource Centre **in a central location in Flint** with 10 nurse led beds provided by the NHS within other Community Hospitals in Flintshire – which ranked as 6<sup>th</sup> choice with 531 points.

### **Option 2:**

New Build Integrated Primary and Community Resource Centre **on the existing Community Hospital site** with 10 nurse led beds provided by the NHS within other Community Hospitals in Flintshire – which ranked as 8<sup>th</sup> choice with 506 points.

Clwyd Community Health Council, in particular Flintshire Area Committee, has studied both of the options contained in the consultation document *Designed for Flint* and has listened to the views and opinions expressed by the people of Flint, both at the public meetings and at the listening event which the Community Health Council held in Flint Library on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2007. We have also studied the Tribal Secta Review produced in November 2005, which undertook a review of the community hospital services in Wrexham and Flintshire and an independent Research Project carried out at Flint Library by Nathan Griffiths, a resident of Flint.

Out of the 121 responses to our questionnaire (see Appendix 1), 84 did not support either option and 114 said that they could not support the closure of the community hospital. Whilst talking to people it soon became very clear that many people were not against the development of an Integrated Primary and Community Resource Centre, indeed it was supported to a large extent, but that they would like to see the Integrated Primary and Community Resource Centre as well as, not instead of, the community hospital. What also became apparent was that people were not aware of the improvement in health services that they would receive in the Integrated Primary and Community Resource Centre because the focus of their attention was on the closure of the hospital. In this respect Clwyd Community Health Council feels that the consultation would have been improved if it had been carried out as two separate consultations:

**one** to discuss the role of the community hospital and how and where the services provided there could be re-provided in a safer and more appropriate setting and

**two** the integration of the current health services and location of the new Integrated Primary and Community Resource Centre.

Clwyd Community Health Council appreciates that new models of health care are continuously being developed to support individuals to care for themselves in their own homes and that this should reduce demand for hospital beds, but the need for some beds will always be there. The Tribal Secta Review stated that the population of Flint will grow dramatically over the next 10 years. The increase in the number of elderly patients will also grow, ensuring that there will be a constant demand for both nursing and intermediate care beds in Flint. The needs assessment carried out by Tribal Secta identified that there would be a future need in Flint for 10 nursing beds and 10 intermediate care beds. It was recognised that to provide a unit for 10 nursing beds only could not be an option from a clinical safety point of view, but if the nursing beds and intermediate care beds were combined in a single unit then it could be a viable option. This would require a partnership approach by health and Social Services and would provide a mutually beneficial facility.

For many years Flint Cottage Hospital has provided a social care safety net paid for by the NHS but really the financial responsibility of Flintshire County Council. Clwyd Community Health Council would like to see a much stronger and on-going commitment from Flintshire Local Health Board and Flintshire County Council to work together, in line with *Making the Connections – Delivering Beyond Boundaries (November 2006)*, to ensure a fully integrated health and social care service for the people of Flint. Concerns have been expressed about the impact and the cost to Social Services of providing more care in the community and these concerns need

to be addressed to enable Health and Social Services to work together to provide a robust, sustainable service to the people of Flint. Clwyd Community Health Council and the wider public are not convinced that Flintshire County Council will have the resources and the commitment to provide the level of social care which will be required in Flint if the 'social care' beds provided by Flint Community Hospital are lost. A lack of joined up working between local authority and health care providers does not inspire the people of Flint with confidence that the proposals on offer have been well thought out and are realistic.

Currently, the people of Flint have no confidence in the promises of new, increased and improved primary care services. Many people commented that promises of improvements to health services in Flint have been made before and those improvements have not materialised; therefore, the people of Flint, understandably, want to retain the services they currently have. Flint Community Hospital has a long history of serving its community and that community in return, feels very protective towards the hospital. However, the current system is failing the majority of its patients; indeed the main complaint from patients being the inability to obtain a doctor's appointment. Changes need to be made and any delay will mean that access to primary health care services will just get worse.

The people of Flint need to see proof that the changes being proposed are actually going to happen and that primary health care services will be improved. This was also the view of the Welsh Assembly Government who, at a minority Party Debate on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2006, passed a motion which read:

*The National Assembly believes that no reconfiguration of hospital services should take place without adequately planned community provision; and believes that before any reconfiguration occurs there must be genuine public consultation, with the views of local communities not only listened to but taken on board.*

This will necessitate short term investment to allow the running of both the old and the new services as alternative forms of care (which reduce the need for hospital admission) are developed and put in place. GP access must be improved and other services, currently provided by the hospital, must be re-located **before** the hospital is closed. Once these new services are in place the redundant services provided by the hospital can then be allowed to close down.

However, although improvements to Primary Care Services are urgently needed, Clwyd Community Health Council is concerned there are no plans to re-provide the beds from Flint Community Hospital elsewhere in Flint to reflect the current and future identified need. Although we would like to see a New Build Integrated Primary and Community Resource Centre **in a central location in Flint**, we would ask Flintshire Local Health Board to reconsider its position on providing beds in Flint. If Health and Social Services are not prepared to work together to provide a jointly funded unit, then we would ask Flintshire Local Health Board to provide NHS beds locally in Flint at one or more of the Nursing Homes, particularly for people who are near the end of their life and who cannot, or do not wish to, die at home.

Clwyd Community Health Council would like to re-iterate the Welsh Assembly Government motion that the views of the local community must be taken on board.

## Responses to The Future of Health Services in Flint

	1. The Consultation document outlines a new model of care for Flint which includes more support and treatment in the community and more access to specialist skills when you need them - do you agree with this new model?	2. Do you think that the proposed changes will provide Flint residents with the healthcare services they need?	3. Which of the Options set out in the consultation document do you most support?			4. In order to modernise health Services in Flint it will be necessary to close Flint Community Hospital and provide beds in other community hospitals in Flintshire - do you think this is acceptable?		
			Option 1	Option 2	Neither	Yes	Not Sure	No
<b>Yes Completely</b>	10	3						
<b>Yes with some changes</b>	55	52						
<b>Not sure/ don't know</b>	6	8						
<b>No Not at all</b>	48	56						
<b>Total</b>	119	119	16	6	84	2	2	114

<b>Age Groups</b>	
Under 25	2
26 - 45	19
46 - 64	39
Over 65	58
Not stated	3
<b>Total</b>	121

## COMMENTS RECEIVED

The beds inclusive of those that have been provided by the local people and the NHS should be kept in the Flint community - once they are gone they are gone

Flint Cottage Hospital is vital to the residents of Flint, Bagillt and Northop. None of these residents want to travel to any of the other proposed hospitals- more so when they have not got any transport. The Flint Cottage Hospital has provided good health care for as long as I can remember and parents before. If we wanted American rubbish ideas we could go and live there.

We need extra facilities in Flint and with the forecast increase in population, hospital beds as well

The beds should be retained as they are needed by the people of Flint

If ned to attend Mold hospital in evening virtually no public transport. If needed to attend Deeside in evening only 1 bus every hour Then must either walk or wait for another. Holywell same as Deeside.

I have relied on the hospital over the last years having been a patient there several times. I do rely on this hospital as it is, particularly GP Surgeries in Flint Centre

Access to GP surgeries needs to be in Flint Town Centre

ideally I would like the hospital to be kept open with the beds as I think it is needed in Flint

Leave the hospital where it is

Already made my comments in replying to the consultation document. NB at the leisure centre meeting we were told Flint House was already sold but it is up for sale or let. How can we believe what you tell us! Also care in the community is not working. This community needs beds in its own hospital. A few years ago we were promised that Flint hospital would not be closed but improved with clinic rooms and an Xray department. Where is the Xray department? Again how can we believe what you say. You and the government are not listening to what people say or want. Where has all the money gone? Is it in redundancies every time change takes place or is it moved into other budgets which are then unnegotiable when money is needed in another area e.g. to cover debts of General hospitals rather

The town of Flint needs beds in the community

Flint needs hospital beds

In agreement with central clinic but not hospital closure. Please listen to the people. If Flint people are expected to travel to Deeside or Holywell then build new clinic or land adjoining hospital and let Flint have both facilities.

Empty Promises. This is Hobson's choice. We cannot lose our hospital beds - FLHB plan - short term gains for long term disaster

New facilities without closure of hospital

As a growing town with future housing increases to over a 1000 more, doctors and services required but not at the expense of

I am against closing the hospital

We want the hospital left open

Flint Community hospital has always been available and a necessary and much needed part of the community.

I would like the hospital kept open

The review identified the need for 10 intermediate beds and 10 nurse led beds. Then this LHB adjudged that the intermediate care beds could be catered for in the community and that nurse led beds could not. So the intermediate care beds are still required wherever they are cared for. The figures given for the running cost for Flint Hospital works out at £950,000 This is approximately £50,000 per bed per year for 19 beds. On a best value criteria not many (if any) hospitals can compete with this for value as for the 30 bed criteria this makes financial mockery of the minimum bed numbers and compares to the other local community hospitals. The review and consultation had only one result and that was the closing of Flint Community Hospital prior to it taking place. Regardless of the Wanless and other reports. As holywell hospital was decided upon over 10 years ago and not over the past 4 years (of these reports) no public consultations, glossy brochures. The only time a consultation has taken place is when facilities are being taken away from this community. The CHC should reject the closure of Flint Community Hospital to allow the Welsh Assembly to make the decision as the

I would like the hospital kept open

I would like the hospital to stay open

My main concern is that no-one is listening to the people of Flint - We are educated people and do not like to be thought of as stupid.

The care in the community is certainly not working. As some point in our lives we will need a stay at Flint Cottage Hospital. I attended a meeting a few years ago and we were told that the services in Flint hospital would be improved by installing X ray equipment - this has not been done. A lot of money has been spent already refurbishing this little hospital is in very good condition. After 10 years in office, I read in the paper today that now the government will now start to focus on Patient Services!! What more can I say? Where has all the

We need beds in Flint for the local people

I would like to keep the hospital in Flint

People wish to die in their own community hospital

I would like to keep the hospital in Flint

I prefer to keep things as they are

Should not have to travel outside Flint for a bed. Flint hospital is full (contrary to what LHB says)

I would like the hospital beds kept open

The population of Flint has a lot of elderly people and we need to keep the beds.

Older people have problems with transport and would not be able to travel as public transport is not very good.

Flint community needs the hospital beds.

Leave the hospital open and expand the services.

I want to keep hospital beds in Flint so that people can see and visit their friends and family

By closing the hospital it is leaving residents of Flint without the care some require.

Putting the health centre in the middle of Flint is not a good idea as it will be vandalised.

Beds are needed in Flint

A new hospital I would agree to.

Flint needs its own hospital facilities

Keep beds in Flint

I would like the hospital turned into a hospice

Terminally ill patients need to be in a hospital near their families.

I would like FLHB to go back to the drawing board and come up with a new proposal to satisfy all the people of Flint and the surrounding area. I see no reason why you cannot provide a brand new Community Hospital for the town with all the latest facilities (much on the lines of Mold, Deeside and eventually Holywell) According to the press reports, the government has alloted extra money to the Welsh Assembly for National Health services. So why cannot some of this money be spent on providing Flint with a new Community Hospital. The present cottage hospital (as it is locally known) once had an operating theatre and other facilities and a nurses' home, but over the years they were removed. Unlike your Chief Executive, I believe that a town the size of Flint should have on the doorstep, health Beds should be kept local for friends and family to visit and also public transport is a big problem.

As Flint is growing even bigger in population it is vital that we do have more services for the health of our community plus we do need the The resource centre must be in the centre of Flint for older people who cannot walk to the cottage hospital

I have 4 children and each has been a minor patient in Flint hospital. Both my wife and I have also been patients there.

They had to shut Glan Clwyd because of no beds, Flint would have been an alternative.

I thought we lived in a democracy. None of the residents of Flint I have spoken to wants to lose the beds in Flint hospital only the LHB are in favour. What about the transport to these other hospitals? Buses don't go direct to Mold and local charity transport is overstrched. Now no provision has been made for people who don't have cars . Build a new by all means but keep beds in Flint. The new facility needs to be modified to include beds. At the meeting in St Asaph regarding the main hospitals we were told that more treatment would I think it is disgraceful that you think that Flint does not deserve a hospital when it is the largest town in the county and yet you are spending millions of pounds in Holywell.

1. With the advent of the Oakenholt building Flint will become a large centre of population, retention of a hospital is a must.
2. The allocation of beds to the various hospitals is a variable so it is possible to have the members of a family hospitalised in different localities.
3. Visiting relatives could be a major problem a) are the hospitals on a bus route b) frequency of bus services especially on weekends c)

We have all turned to Flint hospital at one time or another and are very grateful to them. We need it to stay open and keep the beds

Transportation to the alternative hospitals is practically non-existent and current charitable/voluntary organisations cannot provide for any extra transport. Currently the funds for the proposals have not been allocated and will only be requested after Flint hospital has gone. Once again a cart before a horse situation. If funding is not available after our hospital has ceased, it will be too late to reinstate it. There is no guarantee funds will ever be available. This is all pie in the sky.

Flint is a growing town and needs the beds. 24 hour care will be taken away if Flint Community hospital closes. The consultation provided by the LHB in my view was not a consultation because they have proposed the choices for the residents of Flint.

I wish strongly for beds to be kept in the community.

We welcome new services but not at the cost of loss of hospital beds and hospital

We welcome new and improved services in Flint but not at the loss of beds or the hospital. Doctors would have a nice new premise at the cost of NHS, but they have their own budget.

I agree with the improvement of GP surgeries in Flint but we still need inpatient beds.

Flint does need an improved service but inpatient beds should be retained in Flint. As the town gets larger, the elderly population are the main users of beds and demand will increase.

Do not close Flint Community Hospital

It is a disgrace the people of Flint will be losing their hospital if the proposals are accepted.

Have you thought how people are going to get to other hospitals who have no transport and also the patients won't get the care that they

As the population of Flint is likely to increase with the building of 900 new houses in Oakenholt, we need more hospital space not less.

For the size of Flint beds are desperately needed in Flint.

The people of Flint need bed space in their local hospital i.e. Flint Cottage Hospital.

This town needs its own hospital beds in the town.

Flint needs beds in a community hospital in its own town. The residents of the town deserve this.

We need a medical centre in the centre of Flint but we also need the hospital with twenty plus beds.

**Question 1: The consultation document outlines a new model of care for Flint which includes more support and treatment in the community and more access to specialist skills when you need them - do you agree with this new model?**

**Question 2: Do you think that the changes proposed in the consultation document will provide Flint residents with the healthcare services they need?**

**Question 3: Which of the proposals set out in the consultation document do you most support?**

**Question 4: In order to modernise health services in Flint, it will be necessary to close Flint Community Hospital and provide 10 Nurse led beds in other community hospitals in Flintshire (Mold, Deeside or Holywell). Do you think that this is acceptable?**

No, not at all

No, not at all

Neither

No

No, not at all  
No, not at all

No, not at all  
No, not at all

Neither  
Neither

No  
No

-

-

Neither

No

No, not at all

No, not at all

Neither

No

-

Yes with some changes

Neither

No

Yes with some changes

No, not at all

-

No

Yes with some changes

No, not at all

Neither

No

-	No, not at all	-	-
Yes with some changes	Not sure/don't know	Neither	No
Yes with some changes	Yes with some changes	Neither	No
Yes with some changes	Yes with some changes	Neither	No
Yes with some changes	Yes with some changes	Neither	No
Yes, completely	Yes with some changes	Proposal 2	Yes
No, not at all	No, not at all	Neither	No
No, not at all	No, not at all	Neither	No
No, not at all	No, not at all	Neither	No

**Question 5: Do you have any comments you would like to make?**

Thank goodness someone is listening to the people of Flint. The consultation is a sham and should have been withdrawn. Someone should be accountable for the public money that has been wasted on this exercise.

Flint Hospital and its beds provide vital services to the residents of the town and its surrounding area. It is a disgrace that the LHB are even thinking of removing such vital services. These services should be retained, enhanced and developed not taken  
It is essential that the beds are kept at the Community Hospital.

It is not necessary to close Flint hospital. It is expedicious for the Local Health Board to close it so they can reduce the North East Wales trusts deficit.

With regard to question 1 - I support the need for improved Primary Care in Flint but feel strongly that NHS beds should not be removed from Flint.

Flint should have a hospital with beds for the needs of people in Flint. New facilities are needed for doctors and clinic but not at the expense of the beds and our hospital.

I feel people will have to pay for their aftercare, therefore it will not comply with the NHS rules. The nursing home investors are the only winners in your proposals not the people of Flint.

It is not necessary to close Flint Community Hospital or lose the hospital beds to improve G.P. services. We need a primary health centre but we also need a hospital with beds.

**Question**

**6: Please indicate your age group:**

**Question 7: Which of the following categories do you fit into?**

26 to 45 Local Resident

46 to 64 Local Resident

46 to 64 Local Resident

46 to 64 Local Resident

- Local Resident

26 to 45 Local Resident

46 to 64 Local Resident

Relative or Carer of patient : Local Resident  
up to 25

There is no doubt that facilities need investment and improvement but why is this at the expense of the Hospital and its beds. The two things should not have been linked. We want new facilities but we also want to keep, improve and develop our hospital.

Keep the hospital open.

I think beds are needed in Flint

Community needs their hospital

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-

With the largest housing development ever undertaken in Flintshire shortly to commence at Oakenholt has this been taken into account?

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I find it totally unacceptable that residents of the size of Flint are expected to travel to receive medical treatment or convalescence. There is a total lack of consideration for patients as well as families who provide support and comfort. I have heard

-	Local Resident
26 to 45	other
46 to 64	NHS member of staff
46 to 64	other
46 to 64	Local Resident
over 65	Local Resident
46 to 64	Local Resident
46 to 64	Local Resident
over 65	Relative or Carer of patient : Local Resident