

## **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's response to the Hospital Services Review**

We note this independent review of hospital services within South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw footprint and welcome the commitment that the majority of services should remain in local hospitals. Our priority is to ensure that Rotherham residents retain access to high quality services within easy access and acknowledge the report's commitment to maintaining most locally provided services. We acknowledge and are supportive of the concept of the hub model and whilst we would welcome further details, if indeed this proposal does seem to offer a cost effective way of retaining local services. However it is important that the "hubs" are distributed across the geographic area and not entirely based in Sheffield, we would be concerned if this signalled a shift to simply place more services within the city of Sheffield. We appreciate the issue regarding shortages of key staff and as a general principal agree with the hub model but would want to see Rotherham play a key role in at least one of the hubs

We do support the concept of excellence in health care so see the setting up of a Health and Care Institute (pleasing bearing in mind the move towards further integration we welcome that care is mentioned as well as health) and an innovation hub, developing closer links with universities, colleges and schools. It is also a positive step that future workforce planning is included especially bearing in mind current medical staff shortages.

The concept of shared working and collaboration in terms of strengthening the workforce, reducing unwarranted variation and introducing innovation to tackle complex challenges is supported however we will await further detail on how this may operate and the local impacts before making any specific comments.

We are pleased that all existing A and E Departments in the area are proposed to stay open and there is a commitment to keep all the hospitals open as District General hospitals with the range of services one would expect. We would oppose any move towards "cottage hospitals".

In terms of Children's wards we support that the children's wards in local hospitals are proposed to stay open and fully support where appropriate care being provided in the community which is exactly the stance many of the services such as Adult Social Services at the Council where this is in the interests of patients. However we have concerns that further reviews may well lead to fewer units and a concentration into a smaller number of hospitals. Linked to this is that whilst we welcome having Sheffield Children's hospital a centre of good practice in the ICS area, traffic to it including parking is extremely difficult whether you are attending as a visitor or patient and we would expect to see proposals brought forward which would address such practical considerations.

Whilst we can support in principle the concept of specialist units, we do have concerns that overnight and weekend gastroenterology services will only be provided in 3 or 4 hospitals. Clearly it remains important that appropriately qualified and experienced medical staff are readily available "out of hours", further detail is needed on this aspect to understand the clinical benefits and any impacts on residents.

We support the concept of more choice being given to mothers in terms of delivery options as long as these are real options within each borough and that adequate information is given to the expectant mother in order to make the right choice. We note that the current model does not meet

the requirements as laid out in Better Births to give a wide range of choices to women and are very supportive of improving the local offer.

We are aware that the report stresses the need for consultation but have concerns regarding the type and level of consultation in the development of this report and would stress the need for further engagement and consultation with residents and stakeholders as proposals are developed.

One of the biggest concerns in Rotherham in relation to recent experience of consultation related to the acute stroke units and the issues of distance to Sheffield. This aspect featured in all the preliminary reports and is featured in the review, but we feel very strongly that the timescale and consultation on this was poor. Likewise in terms of consultation with the Council and the communities it represents, up to this point on the Hospital Services Review, we do not feel that overall there has been adequate communication and consultation with communities and local Councils and would strongly urge the regional ICS to take this point on board. We are aware of local public meetings in New York Stadium and elsewhere but we strongly believe that Council's and Councillors as democratically elected representatives of their communities should be consulted separately.