

# Social Care and Health

## NHS Walk-in Centres Review - Response to referral

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### Purpose

1. To consider proposals from NHS Nottinghamshire County for walk-in centres in Stapleford and Kirkby-in-Ashfield following comments from the Secretary of State for Health.

### Information

2. The County Council has a statutory duty to receive consultations from NHS Trusts for proposals for substantial variations or developments of local health services.
3. After detailed independent consideration of such proposals the Standing Committee has power to make evidence based recommendations to improve and develop the proposals for the benefit of local communities.
4. The Standing Committee also has a statutory power to refer proposals to the Secretary of State for Health where it has not been consulted or it determines that they are not in the best interests of the local NHS. The local NHS is expected to put implementation of the proposals on hold once any referral has been made.
5. Following receipt of a referral the Secretary of State for Health may invite the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) to conduct an initial assessment to determine whether an independent review – to which the Standing Committee would be expected to provide detailed evidence - should be conducted.

6. On 21 March 2011 Members concluded a scrutiny review of NHS proposals for walk-in centres in Stapleford and Kirkby-in-Ashfield.
7. On 4 April 2011 the Committee referred the proposals to the Secretary of State for Health because it considered that **the proposals were not in the interests of the health service. This was by virtue of:**
  - **insufficient assurance of adequate alternative services** of the same or greater quality being in place before the proposals are to be implemented
  - **the Trust not taking into account the public interest** communicated through the consultation
8. A copy of the referral is attached as an appendix 3 to this report.
9. In this instance the Secretary of State for Health invited the Independence Reconfiguration Panel to carry out an initial assessment. The Panel concluded that a full review would not be appropriate and made a number of comments which are attached as an appendix to the report.
10. The Secretary of State for Health has accepted the IRP's comments which are set out below, and expects the local NHS to resolve them:
  - clarity from the users' perspective about how enhanced primary care, better access to GP services and their local Accident and Emergency Departments will combine to match or better what is on offer now, both in normal hours and out of hours.
  - implementation plans demonstrating the capability and commitment of the relevant providers (primary and secondary care) to deliver the proposed services to agreed standards

- a comprehensive public communication programme
  - effective evaluation of the changes and a process of review and amendment as required
11. Representative of NHS Nottinghamshire County have been invited to attend the meeting **to inform the Standing Committee how they intend to address these issues and progress the proposals for walk-in centres in Stapleford and Kirkby-in-Ashfield.**
12. The standing committee may wish to consider the response of the NHS Nottinghamshire County to the issues set out above and may make further recommendations to progress the proposals in the interests of patients.
13. Members should also consider whether progress on implementing the proposals should be provided in due course.

### **Recommendations**

14. It is recommended that the Standing Committee
- i. note the response of the Secretary of State
  - ii. consider the response of the local NHS to the findings of the review of walk-in centres and make further recommendations as appropriate

**Councillor Ged Clarke**

**Chairman of Social Care and Health**

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Background papers:

NHS Nottinghamshire County, Have your say... Walk-in Centres Review

### **Findings of the Scrutiny Review**

The Review welcomes the NHS Nottinghamshire County review of walk-in centres in Stapleford and Kirkby-in-Ashfield. The following comments are made addressing the specific aims of consulting the Sub Committee:

**whether, as a statutory body, the Review Group has been properly consulted within the consultation process;**

NHS Nottinghamshire County have supported the work of the Review Group in considering and responding to the consultation on walk-in centres in Stapleford and Kirkby-in-Ashfield.

Members have met with representatives from Sherwood Forest Hospitals, Nottingham University Hospitals Trust, primary care practitioners and providers of the current service. Members also had the opportunity to visit both walk-in centres. The Review thanks all of the people involved for their co-operation.

Based on the information that has been provided and subject to consideration of the issues raised in this response the Review Group concludes that it has been properly consulted. The Review Group thanks NHS Nottinghamshire County for its support, attendance and for the answers provided by its representatives.

**whether, in developing the proposals for service changes, the health body concerned has taken into account the public interest through appropriate patient and public involvement and consultation;**

The Review Group has received and witnessed considerable evidence that NHS Nottinghamshire County has consulted with the public. This has included raising awareness of the proposals local to the services being considered and also in the wider communities of Nottinghamshire. The Review notes that the consultation has been pursued through adverse

weather, has provided healthy public debate and has engaged elected Members as local representatives.

Initial comments on the Trust's consideration of the consultation in its decision making are included in the response as to whether the proposals are in the interests of the local health service.

### **whether, a proposal for change is in the interests of the local health service**

The Review Group notes the views of the local health community and patients in considering these proposals.

The Review believes that the consultation feedback has demonstrated significant challenges facing the local NHS in communicating the availability – and ensuring access to – primary care services in the communities served by the current walk-in centres.

The Review considers that **there is not currently sufficient public assurance in place to address the concerns raised through the consultation and therefore can not determine that the proposals are in the interests of the local health service.** Outstanding concerns include:

- the availability of sufficient primary care services across the communities of Stapleford and Kirkby-in-Ashfield to absorb patients from the walk-in centres:
  - at times accessible to the public
  - with a consistent standard of access acceptable to the public
  - and sufficient public awareness of those services so that they can access the right care, first time
- the limited public understanding of the current out of hours primary care services available in Stapleford and Kirkby-in-Ashfield and how the availability of these services is communicated to the public.

The Review does not consider that the wider interests of the local health service in Nottinghamshire will be served whilst these concerns remain. **The review therefore supports option 1 (no change) that being the option that clearly reflects public opinion in both Stapleford and Kirby-in-Ashfield.**

### Background - The Proposals

1. The primary care trust - NHS Nottinghamshire County –consulted on proposals for walk-in centres in Stapleford and Kirkby-in-Ashfield.
2. The proposals from NHS Nottinghamshire County included:
  - Option 1 – No Change
  - Option 2 – Expand the Walk-in Centres
  - Option 3 – Integration with Emergency Departments at the Queen’s Medical Centre and Kings Mill Hospital (i), (ii) and (iii)
  - Option 4 - Closure
  - Option 5 – Public Suggestions
3. A Review Group of elected Members was set up to fulfil the statutory role to consider whether:
  - i. as a statutory body, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been properly consulted within the consultation process;
  - ii. in developing the proposals for service changes, the health body concerned has taken into account the public interest through appropriate patient and public involvement and consultation;
  - iii. a proposal for change is in the interests of the local health service
4. The findings of the Review Group to each of these areas based on the information available at the time are set out at appendix 1. **For reasons set out at Appendix 1 the Review was unable to conclude that the proposals were in the interests of patients.**
5. In reaching this conclusion the Review Group received evidence from commissioning and provider trusts on the proposals over 4 meetings including feedback from the consultation process.

6. The Review Group also had the opportunity to visit both Walk-in Centres and to hear from local members representing their communities.
7. On 4 April 2011 the Standing Committee considered NHS Nottinghamshire County's response to the findings of the scrutiny review. It also heard from local Members of Parliament.
8. The Standing Committee concluded that the findings of the scrutiny review were still valid and referred the proposals to the Secretary of State for Health because it considered that the proposals were not in the interests of the health service. This was by virtue of:
  - insufficient assurance of adequate alternative services of the same or greater quality being in place before the proposals are to be implemented
  - the Trust not taking into account the public interest communicated through the consultation