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HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

David Gallagher
Chief Officer
Pemberton House
Colima Avenue
Sunderland
SR5 3XB

30 August 2018

Dear Mr Gallagher,

Please accept this letter as a notification of my formal opposition to the NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group consultation "*Making urgent care work better in Sunderland.*"

I appreciate the time you have taken to respond to my letters and concerns in person. However, I remain convinced that these proposed changes will be to the detriment of my constituents, which is why I feel compelled to write to formally make my opposition known.

Usage of the centres

I wrote to you on 31st July 2018, but unfortunately failed to receive a response. In that letter, I asked the following questions:

- How many patients have used a) Washington Primary Care Centre; b) Bunny Hill Primary Care Centre and c) Houghton Primary Care Centre in the last five years?
- How many patients would have sought emergency care vs how many actually needed emergency care when presenting at the Urgent Care Centres over the last five years?
- Where patients who usually use a) Washington Primary Care Centre; b) Bunny Hill Primary Care Centre and c) Houghton Primary Care Centre would go under the new proposals, and how they would receive the same level of service?

Answers to these questions would have allowed my constituents and I to make a better assessment of the usage of the urgent care centres, and the current proposals. However, you have failed to make this clear and transparent, and therefore it is impossible to understand why the new changes are needed and how they would be utilised in practice.

Accessibility

In my 31st July letter, I stated that the proposed changes would not provide more access to GP led care closer to home for patients who live close to Bunny Hill, Washington and Houghton Primary Care Centres, who under these proposals will have to travel further to access the care they need. This will be extremely difficult for some patients, who may have disabilities or little, or no access to transport.



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I also noted my concerns about accessibility to the Galleries Health Centre, which is also difficult for the elderly or those with disabilities. If the Galleries is found to be unsuitable, will the CCG consider using either the Bunny Hill or Washington Urgent Care Centre to host the extended access service, so that my constituents can have access to this service closer to home?

NHS 111

Having had no response following my 31st July letter, I remain concerned about how the proposed changes will ensure that patients call 111 or visit an extended access service hub instead of attending A&E. I am concerned that patients who do not know that they need to call 111 will instead attend A&E, thus putting more pressure on our NHS staff, or alternatively not seeking any medical attention at all.

Sunderland Extended Access Service

When we met recently, you said that the Sunderland Extended Access Service was not yet running to capacity. I am therefore concerned that the Service may not work effectively when working to full capacity.

Further to this, the opening hours of the five GP practices, without taking into account the Extended Access Hubs, total 50 hours each per week, totalling 250 hours across the five GP services that are within the remit of this consultation. Together with the Urgent Care Centres, which are each open 88 hours per week, totalling 264 hours over the three Urgent Care Centres under review in this proposal, the current total access hours are 514 hours per week.

This is in stark contrast to the opening hours under the proposals, which will take away the 88 hours from each of the Urgent Care Centres, and replace them with an Extended Access Hub system at the 5 GP practices, which at 67 ½ hours per week over 5 Hubs will total 337.50. This therefore means that under the proposals, 176 ½ access hours will be lost per week. These proposals therefore vastly cut down the hours of accessibility, rather than increasing them. At 10 minutes per appointment there will be 1,059 fewer appointments each week available than at present, and for urgent care there will be the choice of the A&E or Pallion Urgent Care Centre, which are adjacent to each other, and both involve a significant journey for all of my constituents compared to their access to urgent care at present. So again, a vastly worse offer than at present.

I would therefore be keen to know where the figure of 42,000 new appointments, in addition to the 24,000 current extended access service appointments available, comes from?



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Conclusion

Therefore, because of the aforementioned reasons, I oppose the CCG's proposals and believe that the three Urgent Care Centres must remain open and accessible to patients, so that my constituents can receive the best possible care close to home.

I look forward to the decision being made by the Governing Body on 20th December 2018, and hope to attend.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Hodgson".

Mrs Sharon Hodgson MP

Member of Parliament for Washington & Sunderland West Constituency
Shadow Minister for Public Health