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Dear Max

Thank you for your letter dated 5th August 2019 regarding Cheltenham General Hospital's A&E Department, which I received on my return from annual leave this week.

Unfortunately, there has been a great deal of misinformation circulating concerning the future of Cheltenham General Hospital's A&E Department and the proposed programme of public engagement.

NHS Partners in Gloucestershire are aiming to resume our engagement activities shortly which will continue over the summer and autumn, in order to hear the views of all stakeholders on how we can best respond to the challenges facing our community urgent care and specialist hospital services.

By its nature, this period of engagement will be an open dialogue. It will be an opportunity to discuss ideas and involve people in developing potential solutions to meet future health and care needs.

Through sharing information and exchanging views, the engagement will provide a wealth of feedback to inform future planning. The public and staff will be **consulted** on any significant changes proposed that follow on from this engagement programme.

What this means is that, despite recent reports, no decisions have been made about the level of care or range of services to be provided at Cheltenham General Hospital in the future and there are no plans to close the hospital's A&E department in September as has been suggested.

We do believe our two hospitals offer us enormous potential and both will play a vital role in providing care for the next generation of patients in Gloucestershire. We see

Chair: Peter Lachecki
Chief Executive: Deborah Lee



both Cheltenham General and Gloucestershire Royal Hospitals as continuing to provide a range of same day, walk-in urgent care services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for local patients.

There are a number of innovative ways that we will be involving local people, from a survey and drop in events to workshops, an engagement hearing and a Citizens' Jury, and we would urge residents and community partners to get involved. Full details will be shared shortly on our website, social media channels and through the press and media.

What our engagement information will be clear on is the continuation of same day, walk-in emergency care services 24/7 at Cheltenham General. I do not anticipate this being on the basis of solely a booked appointment but one of the things we will be talking to the public about, during the engagement period, is whether they would value the opportunity to book an appointment on some occasions, for some conditions to avoid an uncertain waiting time, for example.

Finally, in respect of your question regarding the restoration of Type 1 services at Cheltenham's A&E overnight, the options that will proceed to consultation next year, have yet to be determined. The purpose of the engagement period over the next few months is to seek views on what local patients, clinicians and other stakeholders believe will best meet the needs of the County.

Myself and colleagues will be joining the September meeting of Cheltenham Borough Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to discuss our *Fit For the Future* vision but if it would be useful to meet in advance then I would be more than happy to so and my office can arrange.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Deborah Lee
Chief Executive, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust