

10 June 2024

Dear Amanda,

**NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) –
Changes to Commissioned Services**

I write to you as Chair of Nottingham City Council’s Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

As you may be aware, the Committee invited the ICB to attend its meeting this month to discuss the current financial position of the local healthcare system and set out what would be required to ensure financially sustainable provision going forward – which, in the current context, will entail the reconfiguration and/or halting (either permanently or temporarily) of some services commissioned by the ICB. Clearly, where the ICB is proposing changes to the provision of healthcare services that would result in a significant impact on users in the city, it has a statutory duty to consult with the Committee.

However, following the announcement on 22 May of a General Election to be held on 4 July, I understand that NHS organisations as a whole have entered a period of pre-election sensitivity from 25 May until 5 July – so the ICB is not able to announce new policy, strategy or large and/or contentious procurement contracts, or participate in debates and events that may be politically controversial either at a national or local level. As a result, it has been agreed with ICB colleagues to defer the public discussion of the proposed service changes until the Committee’s meeting on 11 July, once the General Election has concluded.

While the ICB’s need to comply with the NHS national guidance in relation to this sudden calling of a General Election is completely understandable, the resulting delay in being able to openly discuss proposed changes to healthcare provision across the local system is unfortunate, given the potentially wide-ranging impacts on what Nottingham people will be able to access as a result of the current financial position. In addition, two specific issues have arisen recently that have given the Committee some cause for concern:

- 1) Firstly, at its meeting on 16 May, colleagues from the ICB and the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust came to the Committee to present on the current Step 4 Psychotherapy Services offer. During discussions, the Committee was concerned to hear of the closure of the Centre for Trauma, Resilience and Growth from May 2023 and requested urgent clarification as to what extent services and therapies provided by the Centre had been moved into the wider Secondary Care Psychological Therapies Pathway for delivery in substantively the same way – and to what extent services and therapies provided previously through the Centre had stopped or changed. ICB colleagues have since returned a written response on this issue, which the Committee will review and consider carefully.



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- 2) Secondly, Alex Norris MP has raised concerns with the Committee in relation to the Fracture Liaison Services for South Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City (delivered by the Nottingham CityCare Partnership), where a decision appears to have been made for its closure by October 2024, along with an associated virtual clinic delivered by the Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. The Committee is very concerned as to the potential impacts of the ending of this service, particularly for the likely frail and vulnerable people who will be accessing it – so, again, it requests an urgent response from the ICB as to what services are currently provided by the Fracture Liaison Services and over what geography, how these services can be accessed by city residents from October 2024, and what assessments of impact and risk have been carried out as part of the taking of this decision by the ICB.

I appreciate that the ICB commissions a substantial range of services, and that it is only required to consult with the Committee on changes where it considers that there will be a substantial impact. However, it is clearly an undesirable position when the Committee hears of significant concerns about service changes expressed locally without previously being informed of these proposals by the ICB. Given that it is the ICB itself that considers the severity of impact of a given service change and decides whether to take any following consultative steps (or not), it may nevertheless be helpful for the ICB to flag issues with the Committee where it is of the view that a proposed change is not of objectively substantial impact – but concerns may nevertheless be raised with the Committee by city communities.

Following the experiences of the commissioning of services at the Platform One Practice, the then Clinical Commissioning Group brought a report to the Committee at its meeting on [11 March 2021](#) setting out the lessons learned on how engagement with the Committee as part of the service change process could have been more effective. I think that it is important to remember the conclusions of this report at this stage and must ask that, going forward, the ICB does inform the Committee of any contemplated service closure – even if the ICB considers that, ultimately, it would not represent a significant impact on patients and communities. This would help the Committee to review the position proactively and gain assurance that the ICB is robust in its assessment of what proposals represent a substantial impact for Nottingham people and what do not.

Fundamentally, I must now seek assurance from the ICB that the delay to its consultation with the Committee on proposed service changes that has, by necessity, been caused by the upcoming General Election has also resulted in a pause in the decision-making process for the issues that require said consultation, before they are decided and implemented. Given the onus placed by the Secretary of State on ICBs and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees to resolve locally any issues regarding the provision of healthcare services, the Committee also seeks assurance that no proposed service changes that would have been discussed with it in June will have reached a ‘point of no return’ by July – to avoid the risk of the Committee potentially being obliged to look to the Secretary of State to resolve any dispute as to whether or not a given service change that was not consulted on by the ICB did actually represent a substantial impact where consultation should have taken place.



I hope that my and the Committee’s position is clear, but if you or an appropriate colleague would like to discuss this with me before responding, you

are very welcome to be in touch. In the context of the current pre-election requirements, I do not intend to publish this letter, nor share its contents further, at this current time. However, it is nevertheless very relevant to the discussions that the Committee is to have with the ICB (albeit deferred until July) and I do intend for this letter – and the ICB’s response – to be included in the reports published as part of the public agenda for that meeting. Following the General Election, I will also forward this letter to the MP for Nottingham North and Kimberley, for sharing with constituents concerned about the future of the Fracture Liaison Services.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G Power', with a stylized, flowing script.

Councillor Georgia Power
Chair of the Nottingham City Council Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee