

Appendix 1 - Your chance to have your say – Consultation Questions

The Trust wishes to consult as widely as possible on the proposal. Please use this consultation questionnaire to register your comments by **23rd December 2022**.

Section 2 of the consultation document provides additional information on the Trust's communication, consultation and engagement processes and how you can be involved.

Question 1

Do you agree that for a sustainable and safe service into the future, that inpatient dementia services provided by the Trust need to change?

While Mid Ulster District Council recognises that there is a need for a change in how inpatient dementia services are provided by the by Southern Health and Social Care Trust, the Council is not in support of the proposals set out in this consultation.

It is clear that there are a number of significant challenges faced in relation to developing a clear pathway for the delivery of sustainable and safe service into the future for inpatient dementia services, Mid Ulster District Council does not agree that it is in the best interests of inpatients and their families to be provided with centralised care provision, which in some cases can be a significant distance from patient's homes and the people and family members who are familiar to them.

Consequently Mid Ulster District Council would like to make it clear that they are opposed to the closure of St Luke's and would urge the Southern Health and Social Care Trust to look at alternatives to this proposal. This alternative would most preferably involve a bespoke inpatient unit to meet the needs of people with dementia, including facilitating frequent visits and access to green space and activities beneficial to supporting their condition.

Question 2

Do you agree with the proposal to have an Inpatient Dementia unit on a single site at Bluestone Mental Health unit (as outlined in Section 7 of the consultation document)?

Yes

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No

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If you do not agree, please give your reasons below:

Mid Ulster District Council strongly disagree with the proposal to have an Inpatient Dementia unit on a single site at Bluestone Mental Health unit. As an alternative the Council suggest that Southern Health and Social Care Trust look for an alternative location outside of the grounds of Craigavon Area Hospital which is vast site that doesn't lend itself to being easily accessed by patients or their families.

It is the opinion of Mid Ulster District Council that inpatients would be better served on a site that can be more closely associated with non-medicalised elderly care provision to serve an aging population from throughout the Southern Trust's geographical area. This is supported by information gathered at the via the Council's engagement stage of the development of an Age Friendly Strategy. Respondents indicated that there is a requirement for better access to care and support to help people and their families live well.

There are proven benefits to dementia unit having access to outdoor green spaces and alternative support activities such as musical therapy and dance activities such as reminisce trails. It is conceivable that by exploring an alternative future-proofed plan, The Southern Health and Care Trust could provide a unit that is bespoke to the particular needs of dementia inpatients, that aims to retain patient contact with their family and familiar activities than are beneficial in the management of their condition.

It is also the opinion of Mid Ulster District Council that the creation of this type of facility would help to attract and retain staff.

Question 3

Do you have any further views on the assessed impact of the proposals and any other potential impacts you feel we should consider?

Yes

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No

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If Yes, please include any views below:

Mid Ulster District Council's elected Members are acutely aware of the impact that a diagnosis of dementia can have on patients and their family members and carers. Agreeing for a family member with dementia to become an inpatient can be an incredibly difficult challenging time for a family. This situation will be thoroughly compounded upon if these services are centralised and thus increases travel times for visiting inpatient relatives while also locating it at a hospital site with a limited onsite parking.

Also, the current shortage of places in care homes and lack of domiciliary care packages, which has led to bed blocking in hospitals for weeks and months has impacted on a significant number of patients who wants to receive care at home or to a suitable care home it has a major impact for people living with dementia as well. The lack of suitable care packages is also meaning that inpatients cannot be treated near family and in familiar surroundings and in some cases this is adding to a decline in their wellbeing and adding to the progression of their illness.

Finally, it is clear that a lack of the staffing is acting as a driver for change. The Council would encourage the Trust to examine long-term recruitment strategies, possibly including incentives to attract new recruits so that suitable, safe and supported care can be provided for dementia patients.

Any other Comments

Please include any other comments you wish to make on the proposals outlined within this document.

Mid Ulster District Councils notes from the consultation documents that there are 15 beds allocated for the proposals at Bluestone Mental Health unit. This number seems thoroughly inadequate to service the number of projected beds required for an aging population, especially when it is considered that in 19/20 NIRSA documented that there were 918 people on the Dementia Register (all ages) living in the Mid Ulster District.

As such the Council would encourage the Southern Health and Social Care Trust to consider the development of a bespoke inpatient dementia service in a location with the capacity to serve all of the Trust area. This suggested bespoke unit should be designed to accommodate a larger number of beds than is currently planned for. This enhancement of service delivery should not be ruled out simply because it is not possible to deliverable on current Southern Health and Social Care Trust sites. The delivery of Health Hubs across the Trust area demonstrate that service delivery can be delivered across the Trust area in an alternative way. Mid Ulster District Council are happy to work with and support the Trust in relation the identification of an appropriate site/s within the Mid Ulster District.

The Trust should also consider that this type of enhanced, bespoke provision could also contribute towards positive recruitments outcomes and higher levels of staff retention. The Council would also like to take this opportunity to request clarity on what the plans are to address the current shortage. Recruiting and maintain staff is as if not more important than identifying the physical geography for the delivery of inpatient dementia care. Additional information on this would be greatly appreciated.

In conclusion, Mid Ulster District Council hopes that the Trust find this feedback useful. The Council is also hopeful that the correct steps are taken for dementia patients and their families.

Thank you for taking the time to complete