

**Trust Management Headquarters
Yeovil District Hospital**

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Dear colleagues

I am writing to you to update you on engagement work that we are doing with groups in Burnham-on-Sea to inform whether or not we provide a different mix of services from Burnham-on-Sea War Memorial Hospital on a test and learn basis. I want to ensure you are aware of the work we are doing and have an opportunity to input. I have provided information about how you can do this further down in my letter.

We believe there are opportunities to provide more services in our community hospitals in line with the shift of services from acute hospitals to communities that is set out in the Government's 10 Year Health Plan. We are engaging with the community in and around Burnham-on-Sea to understand how they access healthcare services. This will help us understand what additional services would benefit local people and could be offered from Burnham-on-Sea War Memorial Hospital.

The 10 Year Health Plan was published in July and sets out how it will reinvent the NHS through three radical shifts. One of those shifts is a shift of services from acute hospital to community. The 10 Year Health Plan sets out how the shift from hospital to community will be realised through the Neighbourhood Health Service that will bring care into local communities, convene professionals into patient-centred teams and end fragmentation.

Our trust and NHS Somerset are working together on a programme designed to deliver that shift. In its Big Conversation, NHS Somerset is inviting local people to shape how the NHS in Somerset shifts care to neighbourhoods to achieve better health outcomes and less pressure on acute hospitals. The work that we are doing will help to inform the work that NHS Somerset is leading.

We think there are exciting opportunities to make greater use of Burnham-on-Sea War Memorial Hospital by providing an expanded range of diagnostic services and

treatments which could benefit many more local people and mean that fewer local residents need to travel to one of our acute hospitals.

We have begun work with our Leagues of Friends, and with colleagues, discussing potentially reducing bedded capacity at those hospitals in order to create more physical space for additional services such as additional outpatients, chemotherapy, cardiology, urology, and community midwifery. We are engaging with community groups in Burnham-on-Sea to understand how they access healthcare services and the barriers to access. This will help us understand what additional services would benefit local people and could be offered from Burnham-on-Sea War Memorial Hospital. If any changes are made to services provided from the hospital, they will be on a temporary test and learn basis. No decisions have been made to permanently close community hospital beds.

We are engaging in Burnham-on-Sea in a number of ways:

- Our trust's patient engagement and involvement team is reaching out to local people to understand how they access healthcare services in their local areas. The team is dropping into local venues and groups to hear from all voices, including those who are often less heard, about what's working, what's missing, and what would make the biggest difference to local people.
- The team is inviting people in those areas to fill in an online survey which focuses on their experiences and ideas for improving healthcare services in their area.
- A Neighbourhood Stakeholder Reference Group will be established in Burnham-on-Sea as an advisory group that will bring together a diverse range of voices to help shape community health and care services, ensuring decisions are informed by real experiences and local priorities. These will work alongside a Somerset Stakeholder Reference Group that will take a wider look at the longer term community services strategy for the county. Anybody who wants to be part of a neighbourhood or the Somerset stakeholder reference group should email somicb.engagement@nhs.net to express an interest.

So far, we have heard very strongly how valued Burnham-on-Sea War Memorial Hospital is and concern about a loss of local services if we do temporarily reduce community hospital beds to provide additional services. At the same time, we have heard how local people value the availability of services locally that enable them to avoid long journeys to larger hospitals. Travel distances, poor public transport and parking costs are barriers to accessing services that are provided from acute hospitals. We have also heard concern about online booking services that are described as confusing, inaccessible, or impersonal, especially for older or less tech-savvy patients, and concern about the need for more support for unpaid carers. As representatives of your communities, please do let us know if there are groups that you know of that we should hear from.

Once the local engagement is completed, the trust will analyse the information and share it with you. We estimate that this will take place sometime in November. After that we will be able to assess whether we can make improvements to local people's access to NHS services by providing a greater mix of services from Burnham-on-Sea War Memorial Hospital. Any changes to the range of diagnostics, treatments and

outpatient services and the number of beds provided at the hospital would be done on a temporary basis in the form of a test and learn.

I will continue to update you as this work continues.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Lewis", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Lewis
Chief Executive