

Bodmin Town Council



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Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health & Social Care
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2NS

Date: 26 January 2018

Our Ref: SMF/FC/2018

Your Ref:

Dear Sir

Bodmin Minor Injury Unit (MIU) – Bodmin Hospital

I have been instructed to write by Bodmin Town Council in the strongest possible terms to seek assurances around the future health care provision in Bodmin, which is currently provided by Bodmin Hospital and the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU).

This matter was discussed at the Bodmin Town Council meeting held on 18 January 2018 and follows recent discussions around health care in Cornwall which are being progressed under the Shaping our Future Transformation Board. The most recent update on the health and social care priorities were provided to the residents of Bodmin at the Bodmin Community Network Area meeting held on 10 January 2018 by Karen Kay, Urgent & Emergency Care Executive Lead for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly and Tracey Lee, Interim Programme Manager, for Shaping our Future - <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/22983857/taking-control-shaping-our-future.pdf> refers.

The transformation programme and the impact to healthcare for Bodmin are of serious concern and could lead to a situation where Bodmin has no hospital or minor injury unit. If this happens it would lead to a significant and fairly critical impact on the Royal Cornwall Hospital Trillick (RCHT) in Truro, some 27 miles away.

Bodmin is a town with a population of around 15,200 with a growth pattern of up to 3,000 new homes by 2030 as outlined in the Cornwall Local Plan. It is therefore imperative that health care provision is in place to cater for the needs of the community today and into the future as this is vital infrastructure in a rural county.

Bodmin is at the geographical heart of the County with excellent transport links via the A30 and A38 to mid and east Cornwall and points east and west and so serves a number of residents in other communities requiring access to hospital treatment. Bodmin will be ideally situated at the conflux of the A30 and A38 to provide a centre for health care given its central location and should be retained and enhanced as a top priority.

However, Bodmin saw its treatment centre close from 1 April 2017 for elective care services as the contract with Ramsay Health Care UK was not extended. This was a major blow for the town and the many residents in surrounding communities. The knock-on effect to more senior patients without access to a private vehicle is more acute given the difficulties that can be faced with ease of access to public transport in a rural county. The emerging consultation process regarding Bodmin's hospital and MIU is of the utmost concern and worry to everyone in Bodmin and neighbouring parishes. The Bodmin hospital and MIU is strategically located on the A30 spine which runs through the middle of the county and is at the midway point between Treliske in Truro and Derriford in Plymouth. With enhancement to an Urgent Treatment Centre the Bodmin hospital site would be well placed to cater for additional urgent care trips which would relieve pressure on these two A&E hospitals.

Bodmin has traditionally been the focal point for health care provision and has served a number of contiguous parishes with hospital appointments and health care needs over the years. Bodmin has also served other large communities with their routine hospital referrals and any minor injury issues and supports towns such as Wadebridge (6 miles away with a population of 8,272) and Padstow (14 miles away on the North Coast with a resident population of 2,500 which swells to 5,500 in the summer season – these figures do not include the significant number of day trippers that Cornish communities, such as Bodmin, Wadebridge and Padstow, can and do receive during the summer months). Whilst Padstow could be served by the current hospital at Newquay, it is worth noting that this seaside town has significant seasonal influx of summer visitors, making Bodmin the easier to access by road and preferable for treatment.

The availability of a hospital with a minor injuries unit ensures that people living in Bodmin and surrounding parishes do not have to travel the 27 miles to the Royal Cornwall Treliske Hospital in Truro which will take at least 45 minutes (subject to traffic) or alternatively to the Derriford Hospital in Plymouth (Devon) which is 31.4 miles from Bodmin along the A38 with a journey time of at least 50 minutes by car (subject to traffic). For people living in the more rural areas of the county, these travel times will be exacerbated given the minor nature of roads and the inevitable delays that this can bring – for example, people living in Padstow will travel by car for a minimum 47 minutes (27.6 miles) to reach Treliske and 1 hour 15 minutes (52.5 miles) to arrive at Derriford by car. Public transport will therefore increase these travel times significantly dependent upon frequency of service, which is not on a par with a city, with many reliant on one hour bus services at best (on average). It is therefore essential for Bodmin and these

communities to have access to a hospital and minor injury facility in Bodmin given its geographical proximity in the centre of the County to serve these settlements.

A hospital and MIU in Bodmin can also assist with throttling back the increasing demand and pressure that hospitals and A&E departments at both Treliske and Derriford can receive and there have been ongoing discussions around opportunities to enhance Bodmin's health care facilities to further mitigate these pressures by increasing onsite treatment and access to more routine appointments from Bodmin Hospital. Bodmin is at the halfway point between these two centres of primary hospital A&E provision and is therefore ideally situated for an urgent care centre given its road transport links. Discussions around enhancing Bodmin's MIU have been ongoing since 2016 so are at an advanced stage when compared with other towns in Cornwall for an urgent care centre. Discussions have included NHS England, Kernow Commissioning and Cornwall Council as well as General Practices in Bodmin around potential 'one estate' opportunities for property rationalisation and shared services to trigger efficiencies whilst improving health care in the town. These exciting conversations, which could ameliorate capacity issues at Treliske and Derriford can also assist with reductions in undoubted stress on nursing, doctors and consultancy staff leading to improved health and wellbeing for staff, patients and ultimately less demand on beds and addressing the current waiting times. This transformation news however seems to put Bodmin's MIU at risk. Bodmin cannot and should not lose provision of this vital and basic level of health care.

It is perhaps worth noting that the Bodmin hospital site includes a much valued and needed mental health care unit and there is a live planning application to provide an additional (CAMHS) child and adolescent mental health service unit (planning application PA17/11240 refers) on the site. Any review of property and services by the NHS which would put these facilities at risk would not make sense and serious questions would need to be asked.

Bodmin only has two GP surgeries and struggles to provide appointments for the town's population. Dental care is also operating above capacity with many residents not able to easily access routine appointments given the demand on dental practitioners. Service and funding is usually demand led but there seems to be a role reversal as increasing demand through an ageing population seems to equal an underfunded and diminution of service which forces people to face extended journey times and significant delays once at a hospital (waiting times). It is also noted that the extortionate parking charges at main hospitals through car park management and enforcement being externalised to private management companies is a further kick in the teeth to residents of Cornwall, many of whom are on below national average wages and from some of the poorest wards in the country.

The Shaping of Future programme has three aims:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of the local population;
- Improve the quality of local health and care services;
- Deliver financial stability in the local health and care system.

It is Bodmin Town Council's strong view that these aims can only be met by providing quality local health care provision and Bodmin is well placed for enhancement into an Urgent Treatment / Care Centre to mitigate the impact on Treliske (RCHT) and Derriford (Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust) given its location on the conflux of the A30 and A38.

Whilst Bodmin Town Council is aware of the challenges facing the health care system, particularly around funding arrangements, it is hoped that there will be a common sense approach applied to the logistical issues of ensuring that access to health care facilities is taken into account and decisions are not just based on an accounting / cash saving formula.

In summary, Bodmin Town Council would therefore seek assurances and answers to the following questions:

- 1. Has Bodmin Hospital and Minor Injury Unit been identified for closure?**
- 2. If Bodmin Hospital has been identified for closure, where will Bodmin's residents be expected to access health and minor injury care needs?**
- 3. Will Bodmin's Hospital and Minor Injuries Unit be retained?**
- 4. Has Bodmin been identified as a town where an Urgent Treatment Centre will be provided and will this be through enhancement of the current hospital and minor injury unit facilities on the Bodmin hospital site?**

Your kind assistance in this matter is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



S M Facer
Town Clerk

Cc: Scott Mann MP (Member of Parliament for North Cornwall);
Karen Kay (Urgent & Emergency Care Executive Lead for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly);
Tracey Lee (Interim Programme Director, Shaping our Future)