

Builth & Llanwrtyd Response To Chief Executive Andy Williams

20 October 2006

Mr Andy Williams
Chief Executive
Powys Local Health Board
Headquarters,
Mansion House,
Bronllys
Brecon
Powys LD3 0LS

Dear Mr Williams

Re: Proposed Changes to Medical Services in the Builth Wells Locality

We write with an initial response to the proposals, which you presented to the LHB on the 26th September. These have been discussed in some detail by the partners in the Practice and we are extremely concerned and disappointed by the overall lack of substance and definition in the proposals.

As you are well aware, for several years there has been a group working in Builth to develop proposals for the future shape of health services. This group produced a preferred option earlier this year which was a model that involved co-operation between the County Council in terms of Social Services provision and the Health Service insuring a retention of as many primary care based facilities as possible in Builth together with access to inpatient beds. As far as we are aware this proposal is still on the table and should therefore form the basis of any future development. The proposals submitted to the Board do not seem to take into account this work at all. Examining them in detail shows that effectively medical input in the hospital in Builth will cease, the only things that will be retained on the hospital site are services that are currently provided there already, in terms of district nursing, health visiting and AHP services. The only new development is of women and children services. This is encompassed in the overall suggestion of the development of a primary care centre led by a local care team.

You will know that the concept of local care teams as put forward by the Local Health Board has not yet been accepted by general practitioners and the current proposed local enhanced service for local care teams has, we understand, been rejected by the vast majority of general practices in Powys as being ill thought out, under funded and largely a bureaucratic exercise. The concept of a Primary Care Centre is all very well but past experience tells us that to develop these services effectively, certainly if it involves relocation of GP services onto that site, is going to take a lot longer than three years. There is no mention in your plans of how other services currently operated from Builth Wells, for example the wide range of inpatient palliative care services that we offer are going to be provided in the future. There is no effective plan for transitional arrangements to ensure that services provided to patients in this locality will be maintained in the future. In addition there are some suggestions that,

for example, minor injury services will be provided by general practitioners, whereas we have made it absolutely clear to you that we are not going to provide this service through the surgery.

Overall this is an extremely disappointing proposal. There has been a huge amount of input from this community, from the medical community in Builth and from surrounding areas in the form of meetings, conferences, work groups and so on that effectively seems to have been ignored in these proposals. Most worryingly there is no evidence of any effective planning to ensure that effective transitional arrangements are in place to provide services to patients in this community when these are withdrawn as a result of closure of in patient and minor injuries and out patient facilities at the hospital.

This Practice has always been ready to embrace change and we have always been ready to discuss with you and others how these changes might be most effectively introduced. Unfortunately this document shows that all the efforts that we have put in in trying to influence this process seem to have been completely ineffective. We therefore see no point in discussing this proposal as it stands with you any further at this stage. When you can come forward with an effective transitional plan and some proposals for a Primary Care Centre that have real substance and are not just a cover for the closure of services in this locality we will be prepared to enter discussions with you as to the best way forward.

Yours sincerely

Dr M Riley, Dr R L Gibbins, Dr R B Walters, Dr A Wallace, Dr H Christley.

Cc Builth Wells Town Council, Llanwrtyd Wells Town Council, Mrs L Jarman Harris, Mr D Price, Col Van Rees, Ms Kirsty Williams.