



For immediate release

GP Hubs Threaten Treatment for Poor

GP surgeries in some of the poorest areas of Sheffield are facing a major shake-up that will result in access problems for many patients. The Government is offering Sheffield £37 millions to create 5 'GP Hubs' which will provide a broader range of services – but at the expense of merging surgeries.

Mick Suter, chair of SSONHS, said:

In principle, we are in favour of offering more extensive and integrated healthcare services at local level. However, the current proposals mean that many patients will face longer journey times to get to their local GP. The Hubs pilot is mainly based in areas such as Pitsmoor, Page Hall and Southey Green where car ownership is lower than elsewhere. At the same time bus services across the city are facing major cuts.

The proposals have already run into opposition. Some of the surgeries earmarked for merging are pursuing their own plans rather than agreeing to be part of the new hubs. Many local people, while welcoming some of the proposals, are opposed to the loss of their local GP surgery – often within walking distance. Nearly two-thirds of those consulted by the CCG were unwilling to travel further even if it meant access to more health services.

However, there is an urgency to the proposals – the money has to be spent by December 2023 or it will be lost. There is therefore pressure on the new ICS Board to steamroller the changes through despite the doubts and opposition. Despite this pressure, public consultation on the proposals has been delayed.

Gill Fearn, Secretary of SSONHS questioned:

Why are these proposals being driven through with such a tight deadline? The answer is that they have to be seen in the context of other government policies, especially:

- Real cuts in NHS budgets, with the new ICS authorities having to balance the books next year
- Deep cuts to the budget of Sheffield Council which is planned to own the buildings
- Pressure to extend health services online to cut spending

This is why SSONHS is mounting a campaign around GP Hubs which includes conducting our own surveys of local people affected and raising questions with the Council's Health Scrutiny Committee and the ICS Board.

SSONHS members have put together 15 questions to go to these organisations, including:

- Whether the £37 millions is enough to build 5 hubs
- Will the £37 millions all be spent on the new buildings

- The necessity of closing existing GP surgeries to make way for the Hubs
- Viability of the Hubs in areas where some surgeries are refusing to merge
- How will the final decisions be made – will they take account of public consultations.

[Ends]

Notes for editors:

For further information on SSONHS contact:
Mick Suter SSONHS Chair 07380139142
Jill Fearn SSONHS Secretary 07772554461
Jeremy Short, SSONHS Media 07875075701
teamssonhs@gmail.com

Sheffield Save Our NHS (SSONHS) was formed in 2011 by concerned Sheffielders to fight against cuts and privatisation in the NHS initially provoked by the 2012 Health and Social Care Act. We have been involved in a number of campaigns, notably the successful one to stop the closure of the Minor Injuries Unit at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital and the Walk-in Centre in Broad Lane. We work with other campaigns locally and nationally through Health Campaigns Together and Keep Our NHS Public.

00 August 2022