

Tony MacCarthy

Chief Executive's Department

Sent via e-mail

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Dear Tony

I write further to our conversation on 12 July 2023 when we discussed the work the Trust would like to commission to look at recruitment activity in the Bishop's Castle area and more specifically, the recruitment of registered nurses for the Bishop's Castle Community Hospital.

As advised, the Trust temporarily closed the inpatient service in Bishop's Castle Community Hospital in October 2021 due to significant safety concerns around the inadequate level of permanent registered staff. These concerns were raised by staff and the local GP and were also evidenced in several incidents and near misses occurring in the months leading up to the closure.

Over the last 18 months the Trust has tried to recruit to the vacancies without success and this has resulted in the Board taking a view that it cannot see any reasonable prospect of being able to re-open the beds in the absence of the required staff. Prior to the Board making its decision regarding the inpatient service on 7th September, it would like to commission and receive an external view on both the Trust's recruitment efforts to date and any prospect of successful recruitment in the future.

Thank you for agreeing on the 19th of July to undertake this work. I set out below the terms of reference for the review.

Purpose of the review

To undertake a review to consider the Trust's recruitment efforts for the Bishop's Castle Community Hospital prior to and in the 18 months since the closure of the inpatient service and to offer a view on all opportunities have been explored. Secondly, with due regard to the labour market in the area, offer any recommended steps the Trust could take to successfully recruit and indication of the likely success, associated timelines and resourcing required for each.

Scope of the review

The review will consider both internal and external information in the form of the following:

- The sourcing and review of relevant workforce data for Bishop's Castle Community Hospital i.e., staffing requirements, staff retention, sickness and absence data.
- A review and assessment of the Trust's recruitment activity in the area for the last 18 months to include the Trust's recruitment methods against local policy and national guidance and a particular regard to the methods of recruitment and banding of the roles being advertised.
- Consideration of the incentivisation options available to the Trust under Agenda for Change such as recruitment retention premiums
- Interviews with any key personnel you consider necessary.
- The review of all comments received from the staff and members of the public during the public engagement process in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff.
- Correspondence received from Unison and other interested local organisations.

In addition, the Trust will supply any further information or data you require to meet the review requirements.

Objective of the review

Provide a written report to the Trust Board that sets out your findings in relation to the Trust's recruitment efforts and any recommendations in relation to sustainable recruitment opportunities that the Trust should consider exploring.

The report should include an executive summary and in the interest of transparency all information reviewed should be either included within the report or as an appendix. Where this relates to third party information, such as comments from the public or staff, a summary or log of the sentiment of the documents should be included.

Timescale for the review

The report is due to be presented to the Board to inform their decision on 7th September and the Board papers will need to be published by no later than 31 August. We would therefore ask for receipt of your report by 21 August in order that it may be considered and included in the overarching paper to the Board.

Points of contact for the review

During the review your points of contact will be Lisa Gibbons, Associate Director for People, and Shelley Ramtuhul, Director of Governance. They will provide support with the sourcing of information and data and also with the arrangement of any interviews you would like to undertake. They will also meet with you on a weekly basis to track the progress of the review.

I trust the above aligns with the discussion that we had but if there are any queries or amendments you would like to make to the terms of reference of the review, please contact Shelley Ramtuhul.

Yours sincerely



Patricia Davies
Chief Executive
Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust