

Member Questions

HASC – 10 July 2023

Cllr Heather Kidd

The Engagement process for the closure of 16 beds at Bishops Castle Hospital has been beset with delays and problems. Could ShropCom explain how they intend to analyse the digital and paper surveys sent out when the closing date is 17th July and the Board meeting to decide the beds future is 3rd August?

Papers will need to be published at least a week in advance of this date. A full breakdown of the engagement results will be required for the process to be transparent to residents in the 200 sq. miles the hospital serves.

Note:

Paper copies have been late to be supplied and by 3rd July there was still no Freepost address to return them to. Posters for the public meetings have been made available very late for circulation and face to face on street engagement has so far been restricted just to Bishop's Castle. They are yet to be rolled out to other areas in the 200 sq. miles. (3rd July)

Response

Once the engagement period with the public closes we have arrangements in place to do the final analysis and collation of the responses from all the different activities we have undertaken with support from the independent companies who have been undertaking the survey and focus groups.

Analysis of the early engagement activity and responses is already underway to ensure we have sufficient time to prepare and consider the required report. Once we have all the responses after 17 July, a report will be written to clearly show the activity undertaken and themes emerging from the responses. This report will inform the board's decision in August on whether Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust can and should continue to fulfil delivery of the contract for the inpatient bed service at Bishop's Castle that the ICB commissions.

We are committed to making sure board members do have sufficient time to consider the engagement report thoroughly and conscientiously, as would be the case for all of our Board papers. To support this we have put time aside in diaries for board members to read, digest and ask questions about the report ahead of our public board meeting. We will do this as a 'seminar session' for our board, to make sure that by the time they discuss the issue at our August board meeting they are familiar with and have had time to digest and consider the outcomes from our engagement activity.

Cllr Ruth Houghton

In patient beds at Bishop's Castle Community Hospital closed on a temporary basis in November 2021 due to staffing issues. Can Shropshire Community NHS Trust please confirm what attempts they have made to recruit both qualified and non qualified staff for Bishop's Castle Hospital during the period November 2021 to the end of June 2023. Can the answer please include the following:

The recruitment activity undertaken and the dates of each activity,

The number of applications received by post and grade

The number of staff offered employment by post and grade.

The number of staff that accepted offers of employment by post and grade.

Response

The Trust has advertised regularly for registered nurses and the wider establishment using the NHS jobs process whereby jobs would be open for a number of weeks with a closing date to allow for shortlisting. Remaining vacant post would then be re-advertised. Given the limited interest in posts, the process was changed from April 22, to a rolling advert (i.e. didn't close) and this continued to Dec 22. Between Nov 21 and April 22, there were insufficient suitable applicants for vacant posts. The Trust decided to continue with the rolling advert and also undertook targeted open days and recruitment events. These events covered BCCH, Ludlow and the SW locality. In addition, the Trust commissioned an external company to advertise on social media platforms via a robust recruitment campaign plus changes internally to recruitment systems to speed up the process of recruitment and onboarding of staff.

April 22 & August 22 events

13 HCA's (non-registered) appointable, 6 people wanting 3.4 wte permanent, of which 0.6wte then withdrew leaving a net of 2.8 wte. There were a number of appointable candidates interested in bank work but not permanent contracts.

3 Registered Nurses appointable, 2 permanent totalling 0.6wte and 1 bank only person

2 B6 Occupational Therapists appointable, 0.4wte permanent and 1 Bank only (who then withdrew)

As you can see from the above, despite good attendance at the event many of the interested candidates were non registrants and interested only in very part time hours, thus not enabling us to run a compliant 24/7 rota with the appropriate skill mix to safely deliver care.

There were another 21 individuals indicated they would be attending the events, of which 9 did not attend on the day, 1 Registered Nurse was not appointable, 11 candidates wanted Healthcare Support Worker roles but were not appointable.

In July 22, in addition to the events and rolling advert, the locality manager for BCCH wrote to all previous Registered Nurse BCCH staff offering bank work but there was no interest. There was also a leaflet drop to Coverage Care Nursing Home promoting Registered Nurse job opportunities but there was no interest. This was overseen by the ward manager for BCCH.

Between April 22 and September 22, there was one applicant in response to the rolling advert who did not meet the job description and specification and therefore not shorted for interview. In October, 2-3 candidates were shortlisted for registered posts who had applied to the rolling advert and interviews were arranged in late October 22, but the candidates did not attend the interview.