

November 2012

**REPORT OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM STAFF AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
AUGUST – OCTOBER 2012**

Introduction

As part of extensive engagement activity undertaken by Healthier Together from August to the end of October 2013, feedback and comments on the case for change and two draft strategic models of care being considered by the programme have been sought, together with general comments about the programme. Feedback was collected from a range of sources, through staff meetings, online forms, email, written feedback, attendance at events and roadshows across the South East Midlands.

Staff and stakeholder questionnaire

Staff and stakeholder feedback was collected using a feedback form which asked:

1. *Do you have any views or comments on the information you have read on the Healthier Together review of local health services?*
2. *Do you have any views or comments on the Healthier Together's case for change?*
3. *Do you have any views or comments on the two draft strategic models of care being further developed?*
4. *Do you have any views or comments on the Healthier Together programme or delivery of healthcare in South East Midlands?*

Road shows

Public feedback was obtained at roadshows in locations with a high footfall and providing a diverse representation of opinions. Feedback was also obtained at BabyExpo, a two day event held in thecentre:MK. Almost 1,000 people took part in these road shows overall and many were interested to find out more and keen to put forward their opinion. The following locations were used and more than 60 hours' spent capturing people's views.

- Abington Street and the Market Place, Northampton
- The Mall, Luton
- thecentre:MK and Xscape, Milton Keynes
- Newlands Shopping Centre and the High Street, Kettering
- ASDA, Corby
- The Quadrant Shopping Centre, Bedford

Road show questions

The following questions were asked at the roadshows, when people were asked to indicate which of the following statements they most agreed with:

- *Local hospitals should provide all care, even if that results in limited staff, limited resources, longer waiting times and bigger deficits. The important thing is that all treatment is on my doorstep.*
- *Local hospitals should provide most care but for more complex care it is better to go to a specialist centre to be treated by experts*

They were then asked for their views, rated on a scale of good, acceptable, not ideal but acceptable or unacceptable, on the following propositions:

- *What do you think about a healthcare system that provides as many services as possible locally and more serious emergency care and specialist care at centres where this led to better results?*
- *How would you view a network of local, midwife-led maternity units supporting low-risk pregnancies and births, working with specialist maternity centres for higher risk/complex births?*

BabyExpo questions

At the BabyExpo in Milton Keynes pregnant women and mothers were asked for their views on the following aspects of maternity and children’s services:

- *The most important thing to me is that I should receive the level of maternity care that I need - even if that means travelling further from my home when it is time for me to deliver.*
- *I would like my child to receive health care closer to home, preferably in community-based facilities.*
- *Women should have a wide choice of options for birth - hospital, in a dedicated birthing centre.*
- *Continuity of care - having the same midwife at every appointment - is the most important aspect of maternity care for me.*
- *There are real benefits to be gained by concentrating staff with more expertise and experience of complex children's procedures at fewer specialist sites than spreading that knowledge more thinly across the SEM.*

Results

Staff and stakeholder questionnaire

Eighty-six responses were collected from across the South East Midlands. These have been categorised into broad themes. Respondents were asked for their location, or where relevant which NHS trust they were employed by. Responses were received from the following areas/organisations:

Kettering General Hospital	49
Northampton General Hospital	13
Kettering area	9
LINK:MK health event	7
Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	1
Northamptonshire County Councillor	1

Milton Keynes	1
Bedford General Hospital	1
University Hospitals Leicester	1
Wellingborough	1
Unknown	2

The feedback, which took the form of free text responses to the questions, has been categorised into key themes, which are summarised below:

- *Travel and Transport*

This is the most common theme emerging from the feedback collected, with 38 people (44%) raising concern about the potential increase in cost of travel and transport for patients and their families, especially those on low incomes or people with a disability. In addition to this, concerns were raised regarding the possibility of those patients requiring emergency treatment needing to travel further in some cases. There is a perception that patients travelling further for either planned or emergency care would have their health put at increased risk.

Further concern was specifically raised regarding complications in child birth and the mother and baby needing to travel, or be taken to an alternative site further away from home. Similarly, respondents asked the programme to consider the additional support for families in finding accommodation close to where their relatives will be treated and where appropriate, financial support for this. The greater use of voluntary car schemes across the area was suggested as one possible solution to help with the transport issues.

- *Specialist Centres*

Eighteen people (21% of respondents) indicated their general support for the concept of specialist centres and concentrating specialist services on one site. However, there is a perception that this could lead to other areas being less well provided for and is closely associated with the concerns raised regarding travel and transport.

Many respondents mentioned Kettering General Hospital (KGH) specifically in their feedback, mentioning the need for KGH to retain all of the services it currently provides in order to meet the needs of the growing population in the area and that the downgrading of services 'disregards the health of the local population'. Reference was also made to how the newly built specialist services at KGH, including the new paediatric unit could appear to be a waste of money if they are not used.

Two or three comments were made which suggested that the proposed models do not translate to better efficiencies or quality, and specialist units would lead to care being fragmented, less safe and more expensive.

- *Training and staffing*

Six people who responded (7%) commented on the possible impact of any service reconfiguration might have on the recruitment, retention and training of staff. On a more personal level, some respondents from hospital trusts raised concern over fear for their own job security. There appears to be the perception that it would be difficult to attract staff to work in a hospital setting that did not provide a 'full A&E service'.

- *Finance and resources*

A number of respondents made comment about the drivers for change and 18 respondents (21%) expressed the view that finance – and the need to save money - is the key reason for the Healthier Together Programme, and service changes should not be made on this basis. Other comments raised concern over the actual cost of the review and there was doubt expressed that any changes would result in reduced expenditure.

Additional comments were made about the need to identify funding and resources to invest in any additional facilities and capital investment that will be required, and that more, not less, investment would be needed to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population.

- *Ambulance Services*

The possible impact of any service reconfiguration on the ambulance services in the area was a theme for 15 respondents (17%). Comments included general concerns about the detrimental effect that specialist centres could have on the ambulance services, as they would be required to undertake additional journeys in transferring patients, and the additional pressures this could create that may ultimately affect the overall quality of service.

It was also suggested that the three respective ambulance services should come under one central control.

In summary there are clear patterns of views and comments throughout the responses received. Forty-nine responses (57%) were received from Kettering General Hospital staff in comparison with other areas/organisations, which should be taken into account when considering the views received through this particular feedback exercise. This aside, the range of views submitted by respondents from KGH also take into account wider aspects and implications of any change resulting from the review.

Roadshows

The feedback from the questions asked at the road shows is outlined below. 881 responses were received. The number of responses received from each area is shown below:

Kettering	232	Milton Keynes	88
Corby	94	Luton & Dunstable	156
Northampton	234	Bedford	77

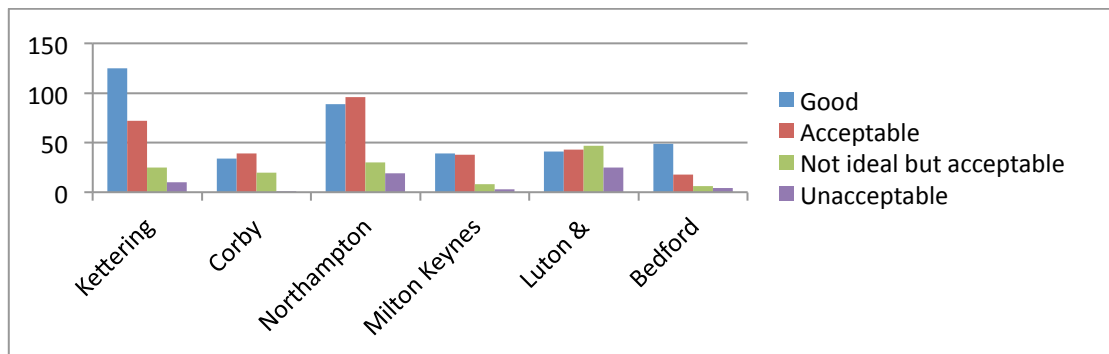
Everyone taking part was asked for their views on two questions and a summary of their responses is shown below:

	Kettering	Corby	Northampton	Milton Keynes	Luton & Dunstable	Bedford
Local hospitals should provide all care, even if that results in limited staff, limited resources, longer waiting times and bigger deficits. The important thing is that all treatment is on my doorstep.	121	45	113	44	86	37
Local hospitals should provide most care but for more complex care it is better to go to a specialist centre to be treated by experts	108	49	119	44	70	40

Overall 51% of people who answered were of the view that local hospitals should provide all care, even if that results in limited staff, limited resources, longer waiting times and bigger deficits. The important thing is that all treatment is on my doorstep.

49% of respondents were of the view that local hospitals should provide most care but for more complex care it is better to go to a specialist centre to be treated by experts. At the roadshows members of the public were also asked for their views on two other aspects of healthcare, and the results are shown below:

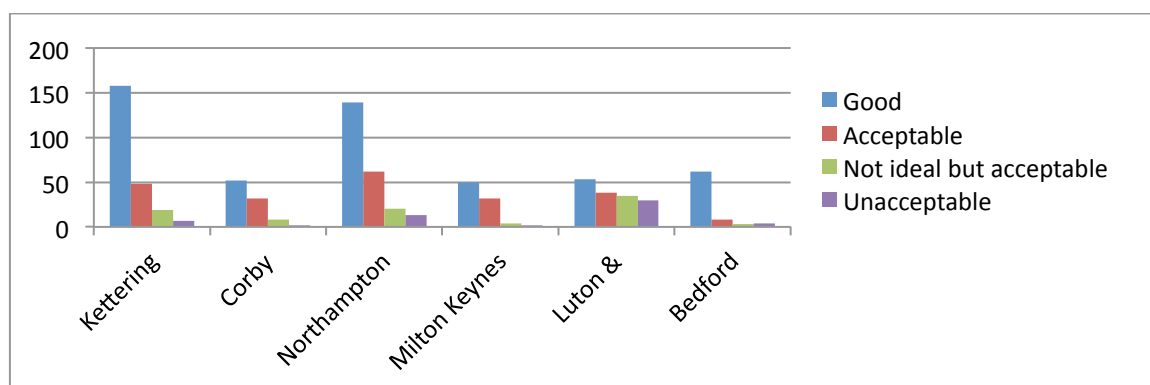
What do you think about a healthcare system that provides as many services as possible locally and more serious emergency care and specialist care at centres where this led to better results?



Overall 683 respondents (almost 80%) who took part in the roadshow told us that they thought that a healthcare system that provides as many services as possible locally and more serious emergency care and specialist care at centres where this led to better results was either good or acceptable.

- 177 respondents (85%) from Kettering felt this was either good or acceptable
- 73 respondents (68%) from Corby felt this was either good or acceptable
- 185 respondents (79%) from in Northampton felt this was either good or acceptable
- 87 respondents (88%) from Milton Keynes felt this was either good or acceptable
- 84 respondents (54%) from Luton & Dunstable felt this was either good or acceptable
- 67 respondents (79%) from Bedford felt this was either good or acceptable

How would you view a network of local, midwife-led maternity units supporting low-risk pregnancies and births, working with specialist maternity centres for higher risk/complex births?



Overall more than 80% of people asked told us that they thought that a network of local, midwife-led maternity units supporting low-risk pregnancies and births, working with specialist maternity centres for higher risk/complex births was either good or acceptable.

- 206 respondents from Kettering(89%) felt this was either good or acceptable
- 84 respondents from Corby (89%) felt this was either good or acceptable
- 201 respondents from Northampton (89%) felt this was either good or acceptable

- 82 respondents from Milton Keynes (93%) felt this was either good or acceptable
- 91 respondents from Luton & Dunstable (58%) felt this was either good or acceptable
- 70 respondents from Bedford (91%) felt this was either good or acceptable

BabyExpo – maternity questionnaire

Members of the Healthier Together team spoke to mothers and mothers-to-be at BabyExpo at the centre:MK over two days in September. The people we spoke to came from towns and villages across the South East Midlands, including Corby, Wellingborough, Northampton, Luton, Dunstable, Bedford and Milton Keynes. A total of 107 questionnaires were completed.

- 85 people who took part (79%) said that the most important thing to them was that they should receive the level of maternity care that they needed, even if that meant travelling further from their home when it was time to deliver.
- 100 people who took part (93%) said women should have a wide choice of options for birth - hospital, in a dedicated birthing centre or at home.
- 99 people who took part (93%) said continuity of care - having the same midwife at every appointment – was an important aspect of maternity care for them.
- 89 people who took part (83%) said there are real benefits to be gained by concentrating staff with more expertise and experience of complex children's procedures at fewer specialist sites than spreading that knowledge more thinly across the SEM.
- 97 people who took part (91%) said they would like their child to receive health care closer to home, preferably in community-based facilities.

Summary

It is clear from the feedback we received from staff and stakeholders via the questionnaire that their greatest concern is the issue of travel and transport, including availability of public transport and the expectation that less mobile patients, family members and carers will require additional support should they be expected to travel further for some of their care and treatment. Following this, there also appears to be significant concern about the effect that the creation of specialist centres could have on other sites that are then perceived to be 'downgraded', and their ability to meet local healthcare needs with what could be a reduced level of service.

Public feedback from the roadshows indicates strong support for a healthcare system that provides as many services as possible locally and more serious emergency and specialist care at centres where this leads to better results.

Feedback from both the roadshows and BabyExpo indicates strong support for a network of local, midwife-led maternity units supporting low-risk pregnancies and births, working with specialist maternity centres for higher risk/complex births.

Feedback from BabyExpo indicates support for children receiving healthcare closer to home, preferably in community-based facilities.