



John Woodcock MP

Labour and Co-operative Party Member of Parliament for Barrow and Furness
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House of Commons
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Councillor Keith Bailey
Lancashire County Council
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Dear Councillor Bailey,

I am writing to you in your capacity as chair of the Joint Lancashire and Cumbria Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which I understand is meeting tomorrow to consider a proposal to reconfigure vascular services across Cumbria and Lancashire.

I am extremely concerned that transferring services to Carlisle, Preston and Blackburn would lead to many more longer distance urgent and emergency transfers for patients within south Cumbria and Barrow, many of whom are elderly or diabetic.

The report raises a number of key points, which I feel should be urgently addressed:

1. These proposals should not be considered in isolation, but as part of a wider review of services within the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust.
2. How extensive and representative was the public consultation in Barrow and south Cumbria? There appears to have been very little public recognition of the potential repercussions for residents in these areas.
3. What assessment of patient safety has been made given the proposals for extended urgent and emergency transfer times for patients in south Cumbria? Their transfer times would surely be greater than those recommended either nationally or by the local Clinical Advisory Group.
4. Have the effects of withdrawing these services on the remaining acute hospitals been adequately assessed and costed?
5. What assessment has been made with Northwest Ambulance Service of the increased number of longer distance emergency transfers and their capacity to deal with this?

6. How many additional transfers would be expected per year?
7. What is the impact and clinical risk for trauma patients if vascular surgical services are in future to be provided remotely with transfer times in excess of the Trauma Review recommendation of 45minutes?
8. What assessment has been made of the impact on the sustainability of acute and emergency unscheduled care provision and out of hours staffing for patients within Barrow and south Cumbria if vascular inpatient and urgent surgical services are removed from the locality and from UHMBFT?

I feel that rural and geographically remoter areas such as Barrow and Furness require different solutions or smaller units to maintain acceptable strategic cover and services. My constituents would be severely disadvantaged if these proposals were to come to fruition, and I would therefore appreciate it if these concerns could be relayed at the meeting tomorrow.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need anything further, and thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours ever,
John Woodcock