



Improving Healthcare Together 2020 – 2030

NHS Surrey Downs, Sutton and Merton CCGs

Consultation Response – March 2020

About us

Merton Centre for Independent Living is a user-led Deaf and Disabled¹ people's organisation run by Disabled people, for Disabled people, across the full spectrum of Disability. We deliver a range of supportive services to Deaf and Disabled people in London Borough of Merton, such as advice and advocacy services.

We would like to thank our members who helped us respond to this consultation via our Craftivism and Chat Group², and everyone who took the time to respond separately too.



Photo: A few of the members at our Craftivism and Chat Group, who got involved in the consultation response.

Introduction

In September 2019, NHS Surrey Downs, Sutton and Merton CCGs were allocated £500 million to improve the current buildings at Epsom and St Helier hospitals as well as build a new specialist emergency care hospital on one of the three sites – Epsom, St Helier or Sutton.³

The majority of services would stay at Epsom and St Helier hospitals in refurbished buildings, with both hospitals running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with urgent treatment centres at each hospital.

¹ In the interests of brevity, throughout the document we tend to use Disabled People when we mean Deaf and Disabled People

² <https://www.mertoncil.org.uk/getting-involved/craftivism-and-chat/>

³ <https://improvinghealthcaretogether.org.uk/>

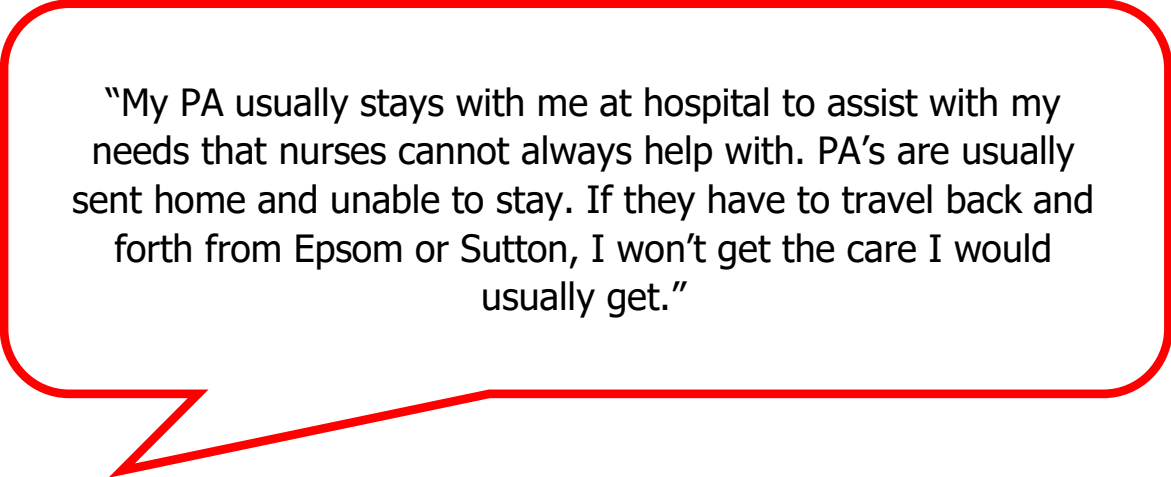
However, they plan to bring together six core (major) services for the most unwell patients, those who need more specialist care, and births in hospital, onto one site in new state-of-the art buildings. These services could be located at Epsom Hospital, St Helier Hospital or Sutton Hospital. Their preferred option is Sutton Hospital.

We asked our members to respond to the consultation on the proposed changes to our local NHS services, so that Disabled voices are heard.

Some people were really passionate about this issue. They said: "Why not use the money to improve the services that we have!"; "When you go to hospital, they should be able to treat you for everything!" and "Sutton and Epsom are not accessible for Disabled people in Merton."

There is also a discussion in the local community around the proposed changes and these conversations are also very passionate about services remaining at St Helier.

Members talked about how St Helier was the most accessible location for Disabled people in Merton. Members voiced concerns about travel lengths and costs to Epsom hospital for themselves and their carer.



"My PA usually stays with me at hospital to assist with my needs that nurses cannot always help with. PA's are usually sent home and unable to stay. If they have to travel back and forth from Epsom or Sutton, I won't get the care I would usually get."

Some members thought the proposed changes were positive. They felt as though the Sutton location was still easy to get to from Merton and the separation of services may result in being seen quicker.

The group acknowledged that there is a need for local NHS to be improved but did not feel as though moving core services out of St Helier was the answer.

Detailed consultation response

The consultation began by asking what Disabled people thought of the proposal to keep most services at their present hospitals in refurbished building and bring together sex core (main) services for the most unwell, those who need specialist care and births, on to one site in a new state of the art specialist emergency care hospital.

50% of the group said that it was a very poor solution

20% said it was a poor solution

20% said it was neither a poor nor good solution

10% said it was a very good solution

Members in the group said:

"With all that money available why not invest in what we already have? Improve the services at St Helier."

"We used to have the Wilson, that closed. Now St Helier as we know it is closing too."

"If I am taken to A & E at Epsom hospital from Merton and I am discharged at 1am how do I get home?"

"When you go to hospital, they should be able to treat you for everything. You should not be shipped off somewhere else. Treat everything at any hospital as it used to be."

Some members were more optimistic about the proposed changes:

"Maybe if they are separate, we will be seen quicker."

The consultation then asked what Disabled people thought of the three proposed sites.

Sutton Hospital – 50% said it was a poor or very poor solution and 50% said it was good or neither good nor bad.

St Helier Hospital – 100% said it was a good or very good solution

Epsom Hospital – 90% said it was a very poor solution and 10% said it was neither good nor bad.

People felt St Helier was central to both Sutton and Merton.

The main issues raised around the Epsom and Sutton locations related to transport and accessibility for Disabled people. People felt as though all communities needed services central and accessible to where they live. They felt emergency/critical care was needed in all locations.

“There should be a free bus connecting all hospitals. You should be able to show your appointment letter and get on the bus for free.”

“The walking routes need to be improved, better signage, especially in Rosehill from bus stops to St Helier.”

“Trains are very difficult for Disabled people. You would have to get to Epsom by trains as there are not great connections between Epsom and Merton.”

“Work needs to be done with Transport for London and Surrey County. Will they expand oysters on all buses in and around Epsom? Will all hospitals be within the same zone?”

“We need more free Disabled parking spaces.”

“Trams are more accessible for Disabled people. If this goes ahead we will need the tram extension that has been discussed locally.”

“Buses between sites need more space for Disabled people and buggies.”

Members felt that because the sites were quite a distance from one and other accessibility and reliability of transport connecting them was very important.

There is a route currently connecting Epsom and St Helier that is accessible for staff and members of the public.

The consultation ended by asking us what else we think they need to consider and if we have any other solutions.

Members shared the view that carers need to be thought about in the new proposals. Accommodation or facilities for carers needs to be available so people can access the quality of care that they need.

Members felt very strongly about social care being looked after by the NHS in the future and not the local authority.

“The NHS needs to look after social care too. When there are cuts to local government budgets, social care is the first to go. The needs of Disabled people are then not adequately met. This should be done by the NHS and not the local authority who want to cut everything.”

“The NHS and social care need to merge. Local authorities’ budgets are cut care year on year, so care is also cut year on year and that is not okay.”

It was also a shared view that technology needs to be improved across all sites. Nurses spend a lot of time figuring things out, systems need to be updated.

Hospitals need to be made accessible for all. One member said “I find hospitals to be one of the most disabling places.”

“We need hoists and closomat toilets in surgery’s and hospitals.”

In conclusion

Our group felt very strongly that all services should remain at St Helier. Although a few members felt as though Sutton may be an okay location, we generally felt as though St Helier was the only option for Disabled people in Merton. Disabled people have a number of concerns around transport and accessibility of all locations including St Helier.

Be sure to share your views on the proposed changes. You have until 1st April 2020. You can find out more here -

<https://improvinghealthcaretogether.org.uk/consultation/talk-to-us/>

Appendix

Th group watched the short film below to help with their response.

What will stay at Epsom and St Helier Hospitals?



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sRInfMkyE4&feature=emb_logo