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12 December 2018

Re. Horton Joint Health, Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, 19 December

Dear Cllr Fatemian,

Thank you for the invitation to provide feedback to the HOSC on 19 December. We would like to provide this written submission to the committee.

We have not heard much from members of the public of Northamptonshire about obstetric services at The Horton so are unable to comment directly on the questions highlighted in your letter. However, we do have concerns about closure of services at this hospital and the impact on residents of South Northamptonshire who would struggle to travel to Northampton or Oxford, especially if reliant on public transport in rural areas. In particular, we have heard:

- there is insufficient public transport to Northampton from certain villages in South Northamptonshire;
- travelling to Oxford by public transport from the south of Northamptonshire can take one and a half hours or more, depending on connections and traffic, which can be tiring for people having to make frequent visits;
- there is feeling amongst residents that there is a lack of viable alternatives to The Horton.

Last year we conducted a survey of the experiences of maternity services in Northamptonshire. The full report is available at <http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/MaternityReport2017>.

Of the 534 parents we spoke to, 63 lived in postcode areas near to Banbury (NN7, NN11, NN12, NN13, OX17) but we do not know how many used obstetric services at The Horton. We have extracted the most relevant results from these 63 people in the attached document.

One comment from a resident of NN13 referred to The Horton:

“The Horton hospital being a MWL [midwife led unit?] is worrying. It would be best to have consultants on site. Also to have 24 hour monitoring there too.”

Finally, we would be happy to help promote the public engagement survey and events via our membership and networks.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Jones', with a large circular flourish at the beginning.

Dr David N Jones
Chair
Healthwatch Northamptonshire

cc. Healthwatch Oxfordshire, Healthwatch Warwickshire, Nene CCG Localities Manager, South Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Forum.