

1. Introduction

The Keeping it in the County public consultation was held by Shropshire County NHS Primary Care Trust and NHS Telford and Wrekin - the NHS bodies that assess the health needs of residents and commission services on their behalf to meet those needs – in association with The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, the NHS body that manages the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford.

1.1 Background to the consultation

Over the past few years, hospital services have begun to leave Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and some patients already travel to centres outside the county for their care. There have been lots of changes nationally to how hospital services are delivered, with a big drive to improve the quality of care and safety overall, and survival rates for major surgery.

One part of the changes is about how surgeons are trained. They used to be trained to do a wide range of different operations but, as new and more complex treatments and diagnostic technologies have become available, it has become normal for them to develop specialist skills. Most surgeons now carry out a smaller range of more complex operations, which is good for patients as they are able to deliver better results. However, it also means that they are less able to perform operations in fields of surgery outside their specialist area to the necessary high standards.

Health professionals in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, including doctors and nurses, have to make sure that the people with the right skills are always in the best place, at the right time, to meet the needs of patients. It is important to balance the mix of specialist skills, and local health professionals believe that to make major surgery, children's services and maternity services work even more safely in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, there need to be changes, including clinical teams needing to work together on a single site at either the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital or the Princess Royal Hospital for inpatient children's services and major surgery.

If services are not brought together in some way, there is a real risk that more may be lost to other areas.

1.2 Developing the proposals

The proposals put forward in the consultation were the outcome of detailed discussions that took place among doctors, nurses, other healthcare professionals, patients and members of the public.

A 'clinical problem solving workshop' was held in August 2010 where hospital consultants and local GPs got together to discuss the challenges facing some of the hospital services and suggest how they might best be tackled. A report on their ideas was then shared with MPs, local authorities, Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and patient groups, as well as with the public through newspaper features and local websites.

Further discussions produced 4 options for the way forward which were then tested to see if they would work. Patients and members of the public contributed to this debate at two events held in November 2010. A second clinical workshop also tested the ideas. Before the start of public consultation, the favoured option and emerging proposals were shared with patients' representatives, including Telford and Wrekin LINK (Local Involvement Network), Shropshire LINK known as CInCH (Community Involvement in Care and Health), and Montgomeryshire Community Health Council (CHC).

In addition, to make sure that everything had been properly considered in the proposals to overcome the challenges facing some hospital services, an Assurance Panel was set up, comprising clinicians and managers from within and outside the area, including medical consultants and senior nurses who are responsible for similar services elsewhere in the country. The panel took a final look at the proposals before they were published for public consultation.

1.3 Purpose of the consultation

The purpose of the consultation was:

- to present proposals for the re-organisation of some services at the two hospital sites to wider communities across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and the parts of mid-Wales that use them
- to understand the level of support for those proposals
- to find out what concerns people had about the proposals and what would reassure them about those concerns.

1.4 Addressing concerns

From the beginning of the consultation period, The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust has undertaken additional work to see how and if concerns raised by local people and groups could be addressed and to refine the details of the proposals. For instance, they developed more detailed care pathways for people in emergencies, discussed specific transport needs with key groups and organisations and made plans for a shuttle bus between the two site for public and staff. A list of these meetings can be seen in Appendix 1.

The findings from the public consultation, as presented in this report, form part of the evidence presented to the Boards of the 3 leading NHS bodies who are responsible for making the final decision on the proposals.

1.5 Assessing the proposals

The Government has identified 4 criteria against which any proposals to change NHS services must be assessed. These are:

Strengthened patient and public engagement

Support from GP commissioners

Clarity on the clinical evidence base

Consistency with current and prospective patient choice

Locally, another 3 criteria against which the proposals must also be assessed were agreed:

Clinical safety

Robustness and sustainability

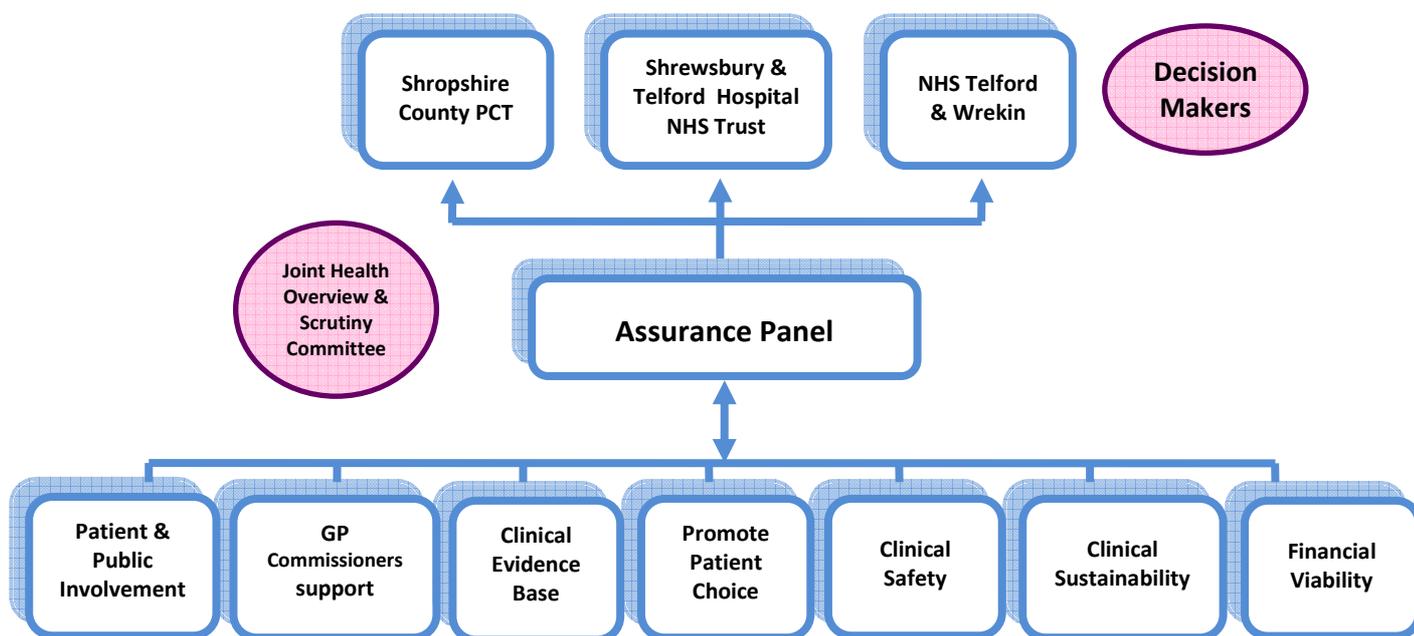
Financial viability

The role of the Assurance Panel was to test the proposals against all of the above criteria, check evidence provided by a range of people, including officers from the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, health professionals and doctors, and take comments from individuals and public representatives. The Panel met twice. At the first meeting, in November, it considered the tests and found the four national tests almost met, but asked for additional information on clinical safety and financial viability. Further evidence was presented to the second meeting, along with the views being expressed through the consultation process up to that date (28 February).

The meetings of the Assurance Panel were observed by members of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, to inform the development of the Committee's own formal response to the consultation. Patient representative organisations – CinCH, Telford & Wrekin LINK and Montgomeryshire CHC – were members of the Assurance Panel and Telford & Wrekin LINK and Montgomeryshire CHC also prepared their own formal responses to the consultation.

After scrutiny, a report on the evidence from the Assurance Panel will be presented to the Boards of Shropshire County NHS Primary Care Trust, NHS Telford and Wrekin and The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust. It is for the Boards to decide, in the light of the outcome of this process, whether and how far to proceed with the proposals.

Diagram 1: Evidence Tree



The findings from the public consultation presented in this report form a key part of the evidence for the national test of strengthened patient and public engagement in the service change process, alongside the additional work carried out with patient groups and voluntary organisations by The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, to develop more detailed proposals in response to concerns raised.

1.6 Role of Merida Associates

Merida Associates was commissioned to analyse and interpret the information generated by the public consultation ‘Keeping it in the County’ into the re-organisation of acute services between the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford and the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

Merida Associates is an independent partnership, based in the West Midlands, with extensive experience of research and consultation within voluntary, community and statutory sectors. The partnership is an accredited consultancy with the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

The role of Merida Associates was to:

- provide an independent overview, and specific verification, of the data capture and collation process
- agree how data should be sorted and collated by NHS Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire County NHS PCT
- from the sorted data, analyse and interpret consultation responses

- produce a robust, balanced and independent external findings report clearly setting out the results of the consultation.

This report presents the consultation findings, separating out the responses of patients and the general public from those of NHS staff, voluntary organisations and statutory bodies, in order accurately to reflect the different terms of reference, additional knowledge and experience they may bring to their responses.

2. Methodology and Reach

The public consultation period commenced on 9th December 2010 and ended on 14th March 2011. The consultation process was jointly designed by Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) teams from NHS Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire County NHS PCT, with input from Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS Trust. Stakeholder advice and support for the process has been provided by the Engagement and Consultation Governance Group, which is made up of patient representatives from LINK, CinCH and the CHC, local authority officers from the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny committee, representatives from umbrella bodies for voluntary organisations and PPI team lead officers.

Part of the role of the Engagement and Consultation Governance Group (ECG) is to quality assure, and act as a ‘critical friend’ for, the consultation process; to make sure that the consultation reaches as many groups as possible who might be affected by service changes and that as many people as possible have the opportunity to give their views on the proposals. The group’s role is also to show how the views of the public and patients have been taken into account in the decision-making process.

As part of the Keeping it in the County consultation, members of the ECG have:

- considered and contributed to the plan for consultation i.e. ideas for how it should be carried out
- helped to identify groups and people to receive copies of the consultation documents
- provided panel members for the public meetings which were part of the consultation and also the Assurance Panel
- suggested groups to receive presentations on the proposals e.g. hard to reach groups.

2.1 Consultation process

A full consultation document was produced that set out the proposals for changes to inpatient children’s services, maternity services and the location of major surgery across the two hospital sites that are part of The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust. It also contained information about possible changes to stroke and urology services. Proposals were also available in a summary consultation document. The consultation documents were available in Easy Read and Welsh language versions, and could be translated into other languages on request.

Full details of the consultation process and downloadable documents are available on the website www.ournhsinshropshireandtelford.nhs.uk which provides members of the public and patients with information about the wider process underway in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin to improve health and health care services.

There were a number of routes by which people could express their opinions about the proposed changes:

- by completing a feedback form (questionnaire) that was included in each copy of the consultation documents and posting back to a Freepost address
- by completing the same feedback form online on the websites of NHS Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire County NHS PCT and The Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS Trust, and the www.ournhsinshropshireandtelford.nhs.uk website
- by writing a letter to a Freepost address
- by emailing views to a consultation email address
- by attending one of the Question Time public meetings arranged during the consultation period.

Voluntary and community organisations could also request a meeting with staff from the PCTs or Hospital Trust to discuss the proposals and express their views.

Consultation documents were sent directly to a broad range of local groups and organisations and the consultation process was promoted in the press and on local radio and television. See Appendix 2 for more details.

The consultation process achieved a high profile across the County and mid-Wales as a result of which 4 petitions were received by the closing date.

Petition name	Leading petition (if stated)	Number of signatures
"Petition to retain Paediatric, Maternity and Neonatal Services at the RSH"		26,096
"Save our maternity care at the RSH"	Wyn Williams, Liberal Democrat Assembly Candidate for Montgomeryshire	2,855
"Save our maternity care at the RSH"	Cllr Heather Kidd, Parliamentary spokesman for Ludlow	519
"Help stop the baby special care unit, children's ward and some maternity services being moved to Telford" (online petition)		3,723
Total signatures		33,193

2.2 Data gathering

This report presents the views of individuals, groups and organisations from across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid-Wales that has been gathered from the following sources:

- 1124 completed Keeping it in the County consultation questionnaires (online and paper versions) from patients, members of the public, NHS staff and voluntary organisations
- 8 official public meetings across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid-Wales
- 25 stakeholder meetings with a range of groups including local council committees, voluntary organisations, older people's groups, GP committees and disability groups
- 28 formal written responses to the consultation from e.g. statutory agencies, GPs and MPs
- 44 letters and email responses from members of the public.

A lists of all meetings held during the consultation process are available at Appendix 3. Where staff from The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust have held additional meetings with interest groups and patients, to inform the developing detail of the proposals and to discuss further the concerns raised during the consultation process, these have been recorded separately and have not been analysed for this report as they form an additional element of the evidence base.

2.3 Data analysis

Merida Associates worked in partnership with NHS Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire County NHS PCT to collate information from the consultation questionnaire, public meetings and other sources, in accordance with an appropriate Data Processing Agreement.

Questionnaire data was captured onto an online software system called SNAP by PCT staff. A snapshot of this process was witnessed and verified by a Merida team member to ensure the accuracy of data inputting and that systems were in place to avoid data entry anomalies. Data was then collated, sorted and passed to the Merida team for analysis and interpretation.

The data gathered from consultation questionnaires and public meetings was subjected to a three stage process of analysis, through which the data was systematically and comprehensively reviewed:

Stage 1: Immersion	The process by which the team becomes familiar with the collected data.
Stage 2: Categorising and indexing	Using a coding framework and key word searches to identify both commonalities and anomalies.
Stage 3: Thematic summaries	By which the data and information is grouped around emerging themes.

2.4 Reach

It is important when analysing consultation findings to understand how the sample of the population represented by people who have completed a questionnaire fits against the population as a whole. This section gives a summary of how people responded to questions about themselves on the feedback form.

1124 people completed and returned the Keeping it in the County questionnaire, or filled it in online, and identified themselves against the following categories:

Table 1:

Total = 1124

Gender	Total (%)	Total (Nos)
Male	31.4%	353
Female	65%	731
No response	3.6%	40

Table 2:

Total = 1124

Ethnic Group	Total (%)	Total (Nos)
White	91.6%	1030
Asian/Asian British	0.8%	9
Polish	0.2%	2
Black/Black British	0.3%	3
Mixed	0.1%	1
Other	0.2%	2
Prefer not to say	2.9%	33
No response	3.9%	44

Table 3:

Total = 1124

Age	Total (%)	Total (Nos)
Under 15	0.1%	2
15-24	1.7%	33
25-44	42.4%	425
45-64	36.1%	411
65-74	13.9%	174
75-84	4.7%	49
85+	1.0%	10
No response		20

Table 4:

Total = 1124

Status	Total (%)	Total (Nos)
Patient	25.5%	287
Member of the public	62%	697
NHS staff	10%	111
Voluntary/community organisation	2.5%	29

The figures show that more women than men have completed consultation questionnaires and that the majority of respondents are aged between 25 – 64 years and belong to a White ethnic group. Some people identified themselves in more than one category of the ‘status’ question, therefore, to avoid double counting of responses, the following allocation of responses was agreed:

- where people identified themselves as both ‘Patient’ and ‘Member of the public’ they have been recorded as ‘Patient’
- where they identified as ‘NHS staff’ and ‘Member of the public’, they have been recorded as ‘NHS staff’

- where they identified as ‘Voluntary/community organisation’ and ‘Member of the public’, they have been recorded as ‘Voluntary/community organisation’
- where they identified as ‘Patient’ and ‘Voluntary/community organisation’, they have been recorded as ‘Patient’.

Questionnaire respondents were asked to provide their postcode and, for the purpose of analysis, it was decided to group postcodes against the previous Borough Council boundary lines, as it was felt that these areas would be most easily recognisable by, and understandable to, people reading the report.

Table 5:

Total = 1124

Responses by area	Total (%)	Total (Nos)
Bridgnorth	1.1%	12
East of County	0.4%	5
North Shropshire	6.4%	72
Oswestry	5.0%	56
Powys & Wales	9.3%	105
Shrewsbury & Atcham	21.0%	236
South Shropshire	2.8%	32
Telford & Wrekin	47.6%	535
No postcode	6.3%	71

Chart 1

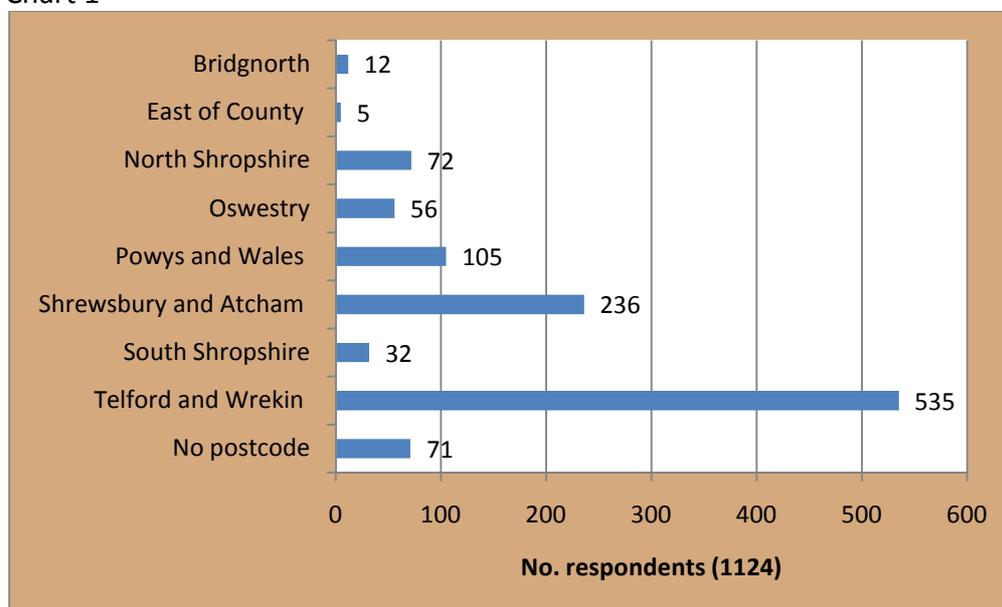
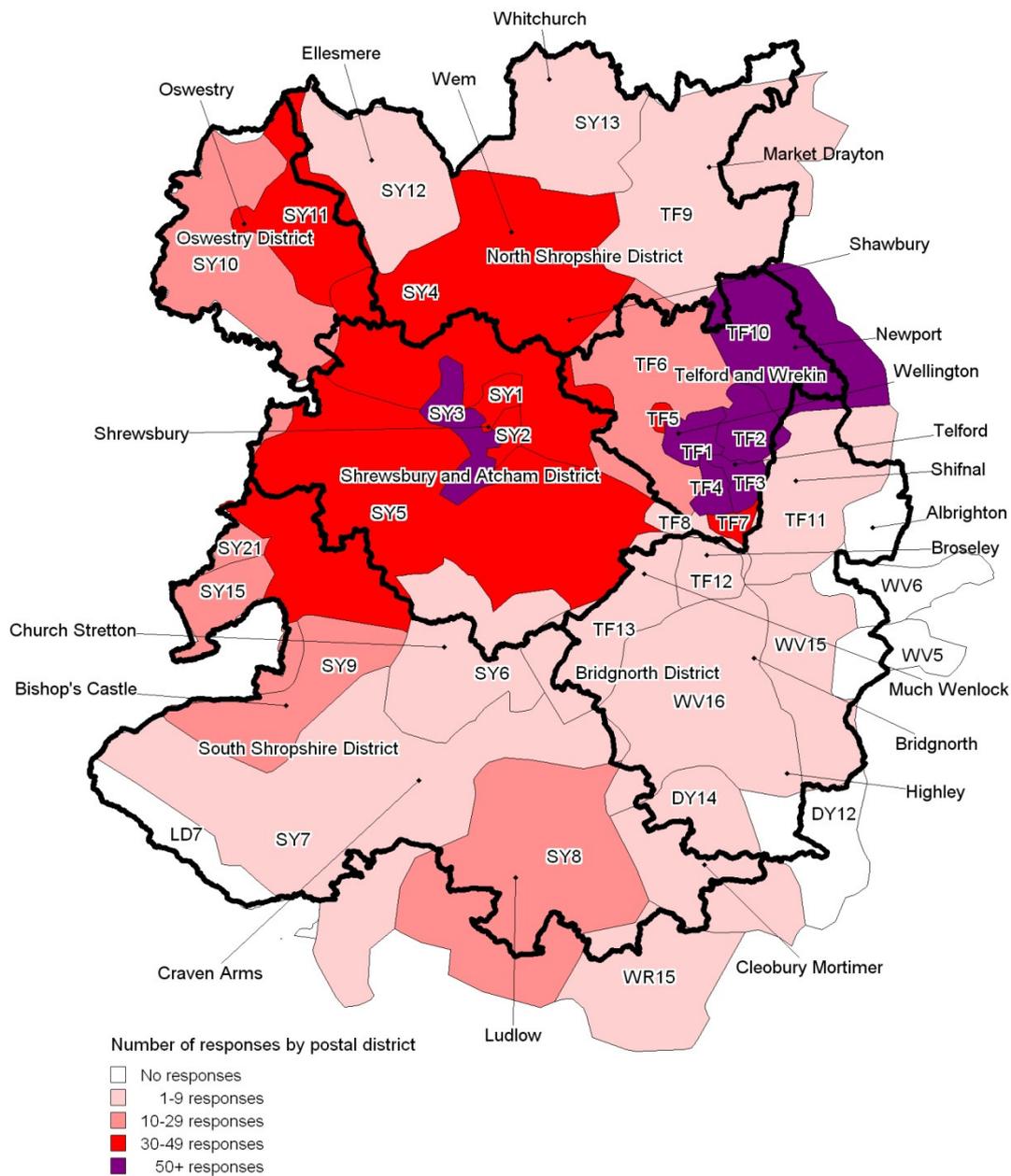


Table 5 and Chart 1 show that most responses to the consultation document (nearly 48%) have been received from the Telford & Wrekin area, with responses from Shrewsbury & Atcham making up 21%. When interpreting data from the questionnaires, it is important to be aware that the findings reflect what has been said by the people who have completed responses. The findings may not, therefore, reflect the views of people from all areas who

may be affected by service changes. This could particularly be the case for some areas, if significant enough numbers of people have not completed questionnaires. Further details of responses by postcode area are available in section 4.

Figure 1: Map of consultation responses in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin



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The map shows numbers of responses by postal district. Areas in the darkest colours represent the areas with the highest number of responses and those in lighter colours areas with the least. A table showing the rate of response per 10,000 of the population for people living in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin can be seen at Appendix 4.