

Healthcare for the Future in West, North & East Cumbria

Response from West Cumbria Liberal Democrats

Q1. Please tell us why you favoured your first option on **maternity services**.

No options are acceptable

It is unacceptable to reduce emergency services without first presenting a full risk assessment and a business case that includes appropriate costs for the identified risks.

Please see the report prepared by West Cumbrian Liberal Democrat Councillor Rebecca Hanson that demonstrates that there is no precedent for the obstetric transfer times associated with maternity option 2: <https://debbieandrebecca.wordpress.com/2016/10/30/obstetric-transfers/>

International research indicates that there are substantial and unprecedented risks associated with removing consultant-led obstetric care in Whitehaven that are around 50 times greater than the risks of continuing to support the current system. Please see the report prepared by West Cumbrian Liberal Democrat Councillor Rebecca Hanson which analyses some of the risks associated with ending obstetric care in Whitehaven: <https://debbieandrebecca.wordpress.com/2016/11/12/birth-outcomes/>

Q2. Please tell us why you favoured your first option on **children's services**.

No options are acceptable

It is unacceptable to reduce emergency services without first presenting a full risk assessment and a business case that includes appropriate costs for the identified risks.

None of the options presented would allow consultant-led obstetric care to continue in Whitehaven.

Q3. Please tell us why you favoured your first option on the future provision of **inpatient beds in community hospitals**.

No options are acceptable

Given the current hospital beds crisis, these proposals should not have been presented without plans for patient care (such as the provision of beds in nursing homes) first having been prepared.

Q4. Please tell us why you favoured your first option on the future provision of **emergency and acute care**.

No options are acceptable

A full A&E services is needed in West Cumbria. Urgent steps should be taken to reinstate emergency surgery services that have been removed without consultation.

Q5. Please tell us why you favoured your first option on the future provision of **hyper-acute stroke services**.

No options are acceptable

A full stroke services is needed in West Cumbria due to the travel distances involved. Urgent steps should be taken to reinstate stroke care services at West Cumberland Hospital that have been removed without consultation and to upgrade them to meet current standards.

Q6. On page 41 of the consultation document we outline a proposal for the future provision of **emergency surgery, trauma and orthopaedic services** in West, North and East Cumbria. Please indicate below your views on our proposal for these services. You may also wish to offer proposals of your own.

It is essential that emergency surgery is provided at West Cumberland Hospital due to the distances involved. Where planned surgery or surgery for which the outcomes will not be compromised by a two hour journey is centralised, the case for this should be clearly presented and openly consulted.

Q7. Elsewhere in the consultation document we explain how the service change options described are to some degree interdependent and on page 12 we explain our wider health and social care strategy and our vision for the future. Please tell us what you think of our **wider strategy and vision**.

Whilst there are some statements that do reflect the aspirations of many of our practitioners, it would be more helpful if there were also some statements which correctly describe the challenges people are facing as they try to work coherently in a context of poor quality and damaging consultations, unsustainable finances and national policy that causes many deep concern. The absence of statements that acknowledge reality creates a narrative that appears disingenuous and does not encourage constructive discussion.

Q8. Do you have any other views you wish to share with us on the ideas described in the consultation document?

West Cumbria Liberal Democrats find this consultation fatally flawed. Taken at face value most people would vote Option 1 throughout as it is the least bad of the options. What is missing is the context of the consultation, including; the risk assessment of the expected impact of changes, the financial aspects and the relation to other services, particularly social care in the community. We cannot accept that lives will be knowingly put at risk because Cumbria is sparsely populated.

Liberal Democrats are committed to sound financial management of our public services. They are also committed to ensuring our NHS is properly funded (and to raising taxes where necessary to achieve this).

For a response to the details of each option presented, West Cumbria Liberal Democrats recommend the response of 'West Cumbrians Voice for Healthcare':
<http://www.cumbriansvoiceforhealth.com/>