



Department
of Health

From the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health

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Councillor Richard Westlake
Chair, Devon County Council Health
and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
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28 SEP 2016

Dear Mr Westlake,

Reconfiguration of Torrington Community Hospital – IRP Advice on Referral from Devon County Council Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

I am responding to your letter of 21 July 2016 referring proposals to me concerning the reconfiguration of inpatient beds at the Torrington Community Hospital.

You referred this case to me on the grounds that you believe local changes are not in the best interests of patients. As you know, I asked the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) for its initial advice on receipt of your referral.

The IRP has now completed its initial assessment and shared its advice with me. After careful consideration, the IRP is of the view that your referral does not warrant a full review and I accept the IRP's advice in full.

IRP advice

The IRP has considered the issues you raise in your letter. It is evident that the hospital is a much-appreciated local institution and residents of Torrington and Torridge district are understandably keen to see that it remains a part of healthcare provision for the area.

The NHS has a duty to consider how it can provide the best care for people, taking account of modern technology and advancements in medical practice, through safe,

sustainable and accessible services. The Torrington *Community Cares* test of change was initiated for precisely those reasons.

I understand that early engagement with the local community could have been improved upon. The NHS has acknowledged this and has taken steps to address matters since.

It is right that the focus now must be on the future and learning from mistakes of the past. I wholly support the suggestions by the IRP for further action by the NHS working with the local community.

A copy of the full advice is appended to this letter and will be published today on the IRP's website at www.irpanel.org.uk.

I am copying this letter to The Lord Ribeiro, Chair of the IRP.

Yours sincerely
Jeremy Hunt

JEREMY HUNT