

Ms Siobhain McDonagh MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Ms McDonagh

Re: BSBV

Thank you for your email about *Better Services Better Value* (BSBV).

I am aware of the concerns expressed by some local residents, but would emphasise that at this stage, no decisions have been made. At our meeting in May, we agreed that our CCG board would meet in common with other CCGs, to decide if and when the BSBV proposals should go to public consultation. I understand this meeting will be arranged after the NHS England assurance process is complete. The public consultation will give local clinicians a chance to discuss the proposals in detail with local residents and stakeholders, including you as a local MP.

I should first clarify that while Merton CCG is committed to delivering many more services in the community, local GPs would not be expected to pick up the hospital services you refer to if the decision is made to change services at St Helier Hospital. Maternity, emergency, inpatient paediatrics and critical care services would be provided in the nearest major acute hospital. No changes to St Helier would go ahead until the relevant services were expanded at other major acute hospitals. St Helier would have an urgent care centre which would deal with at least half of its current A&E workload and would be part of a local network, including out of hours GPs.

Having said that, you are right that BSBV assumes a fundamental shift in care, with many more services delivered in the community. This has been part of the direction of travel nationally for some time, including under the last government. Two of the BSBV clinical working groups were dedicated to developing proposals for better out of hospital care for people with long term conditions and those nearing the end of their lives. You can read the clinicians' reports here

<http://www.bsbv.swlondon.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Long-term-conditions---Clinical-working-group-report---2012.pdf>

<http://www.bsbv.swlondon.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/End-of-life-care---Clinical-working-group-report---2012.pdf>

As you would expect, the detailed plans for delivering better out of hospital services in each area are being developed by the local CCGs. Merton CCG is best placed to do this work locally as it needs to be tailored to take into account our patients and their specific needs. Work on some of these changes is already underway and Merton CCG meets with the other six CCGs involved in BSBV in an out of hospital programme board, ensuring that best practice across all areas is shared.

You ask about improved access to GP services, including extra community services and extended opening hours. These issues are being picked up as part of an ongoing programme of work relating to an integration project in Merton. There are also a number of local schemes under the Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) programme which will improve access to GPs – I attach a list of local Out of Hospital QIPP initiatives for your information.

Once proposals are finalised following consultation and we know the future shape of local NHS services, we will have five years in which to implement the detailed changes needed to services outside hospital. Future models of primary care provision will also be part of a bigger conversation as part of the debate around NHS England's initiative *The NHS belongs to the people: a call for action* which you can read about by following the link below. <http://www.england.nhs.uk/2013/07/11/call-to-action/>

What is clear is that the way NHS services are delivered needs to change – BSBV is only a part of that process. We know that local services are neither clinically nor financially sustainable – none of our hospitals are meeting the London Quality Standards against which future commissioning will be measured. As the population ages and many more people live with long term conditions, the costs of medicines are rising and NHS budgets are likely to be static for the foreseeable future, we need to find ways of ensuring our local services are safe, financially sustainable and meet the Quality Standards. The BSBV case for change – which is supported by Merton and other local CCGs – sets out the challenges we have to address and explains why no change is not an option.  
<http://www.bsbv.swlondon.nhs.uk/documents/the-case-for-change-summary-document/>

As you know, the CCG is the organisation which represents local GPs. If you want to discuss these issues in more detail, I am sure that Eleanor Brown, Chief Officer of Merton CCG, would be happy to meet with you.

Yours sincerely,