

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

General

Q: What are you asking people to consider as part of this consultation?

A: We are asking local people and health and care professionals to consider the options we developed for the future of community hospital facilities in the Forest of Dean.

We would like views on our preferred option of a new community hospital for the Forest of Dean.

If agreed, the new hospital would replace Dilke Memorial Hospital and Lydney and District Hospital when it opens its doors.

Subject to the above, we are also taking the opportunity through this consultation to ask for views on a set of criteria which would be used to help decide where any new hospital would be located and how a recommendation should be made on any preferred location.

Q: What are the main challenges you face in developing and providing community hospital services for the future?

A: The two existing community hospitals are reaching the stage where it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide modern, efficient, effective, high quality care. The main challenges are set out in the consultation booklet and include:

- *The ability to maintain some essential services across the two community hospitals is becoming increasingly difficult with healthcare professionals working across different sites and the challenges of recruiting and retaining enough staff with the right skills*
- *There are significant issues relating to cost of maintenance of the existing hospitals and restricted space for services*
- *The current physical environment within the hospitals also makes it increasingly difficult to ensure privacy and dignity for all patients and manage infection control*
- *Too many people from the Forest of Dean have to travel outside the local area to receive care that should be provided more locally, such as endoscopy.*

Q. How have you taken into account the unique nature of the Forest of Dean and its growing population?

A. We have been supported in our thinking by the Forest of Dean Community Services Review Reference Group which has comprised of representatives from the local community, who have offered their insight and experience.

We have also worked with our colleagues in the Public Health Team at Gloucestershire County Council, who provide information about the people who live in the county derived from sources such as the Census. We have been supported with information by colleagues at the Forest of Dean District Council, the authority with responsibility for planning housing development in the District.

Q. Have you taken into account the use of services in the Forest of Dean by people who live in Wales?

A: Yes, we work closely with our colleagues in Wales at the Aneurin Bevan Health Board and with GP practices in places such as Monmouth and Chepstow, to understand the likely use of services in the Forest of Dean by Welsh residents and the 8000+ English residents in the Forest of Dean registered with GPs in Wales.

Q: What do you think are the main benefits of the preferred option?

A: A new community hospital for local people, fit for modern healthcare resulting in:

- Significantly improved facilities and space for patients and staff
- More consistent, reliable and sustainable community hospital services e.g. staffing levels, opening hours
- A wide range of community hospital services, including beds, accommodation to support outpatient services and urgent care services
- Services and teams working more closely together
- Better working conditions for staff and greater opportunities for training and development.

Services

Q: What services would be in any new community Hospital?

A: Following engagement with local partners, the public and healthcare providers as part of the Forest of Dean Health and Care Review, we have concluded that there is a continued need, and wish, for:

- Community hospital beds
- Additional outpatient services
- Appropriate areas for therapy services and treatments
- An urgent care facility
- Diagnostic services, including an endoscopy suite
- Space to support community events working with voluntary and community organisations.

Q: What kind of urgent care facility would a new hospital have?

A: There is work underway in the county to look at how best to develop a network of services and centres to meet urgent care needs in to the future. This work will result in proposals for consultation. However, we are committed to providing an urgent care facility in the Forest of Dean.

Q: What additional outpatient services would be in the new hospital?

A: Should the preferred option of a new community hospital be agreed following public consultation, we can then begin detailed work on the range of outpatient services that could be available.

A good example would be outpatient services which we cannot currently provide due to the physical restrictions of the buildings e.g. clinic rooms inaccessible to electric wheelchairs.

Q: Would the new hospital have single en suite rooms like the ones in the new community hospitals elsewhere in the county?

A: Should the preferred option of a new community hospital be agreed following public consultation, we would expect to include a higher number of single rooms in a new build as we know that this can

significantly improve the patient experience, ensure privacy and dignity for patients and improve infection control arrangements.

Q: How many beds would be in the new Hospital?

A: This is dependent on the preferred option of a new community hospital being agreed following public consultation. Therefore no decision has been made on the exact number of beds, however it would need to meet the needs of residents in the Forest of Dean and ensure a viable service i.e. evidence suggests at least 24 beds.

Currently, a proportion of the community hospital beds in the Forest of Dean are used by patients who live outside of the district, primarily Gloucester and Cheltenham. We are working to enable their care to be provided more locally. Currently, on average, 21 beds are being used by Forest of Dean residents in the two community hospitals at any one time.

Q: Will there be a maternity unit in any new community hospital?

A: Following discussions with local people and healthcare providers as part of the Forest of Dean Health and Care Review, consideration was given to the inclusion of a maternity/birthing unit. This has, however, been discounted on the basis that a clinically safe and sustainable service could not be provided. We will continue to promote home births where appropriate.

Q: Would there be any changes to services before any new hospital is opened?

A: At this stage, we don't have any plans to change services across the two sites. However, irrespective of any decision on the preferred option and consistent with our current approach, this would be kept under review to ensure we can continue to support colleagues to provide safe services.

Q: Can you guarantee that if a new hospital is built in the Forest of Dean that the two existing hospitals (Dilke Memorial and Lydney and District) will stay open until the new hospital is open for business?

A: If the decision is made to invest in a new hospital in the Forest of Dean we have stated that it is our intention to maintain services at both sites until the new hospital is open.

Q: How does this consultation on community hospitals relate to other services and facilities e.g. GP premises?

A: Although this consultation is about community hospitals, it is part of an overall plan for the Forest of Dean, which will see significant new investment in new facilities for general practice (GPs and their teams) and other community based services in the Forest of Dean.

Plans have already been progressed to improve GP premises in Cinderford and Coleford. Depending on the outcome of this consultation, other GP facilities in the Forest of Dean may also need to be prioritised for improvement.

Q: Why has there been recent investment in facilities and equipment at the two hospitals?

A: If the preferred option of building a new community hospital is agreed after public consultation, we believe it would take at least four years before the new hospital was ready to open its doors.

Therefore, we have an important responsibility to provide the best possible services, facilities and equipment within that period.

Should the preferred option of a new community hospital be agreed after public consultation, we would work closely with our colleagues and community partners, such as the League of Friends of both hospitals, to consider what equipment it would be feasible and appropriate to transfer.

Q: If a new hospital is built would there be an impact on the Forest of Dean Dialysis Unit?

A: We have recognised that there may be an opportunity to consider co-location with a new hospital development, however at the present time this has not been worked up in any detail and would need to be considered if the decision to invest in a new hospital is made.

Access

Q: Would you provide transport to the new hospital?

A: Whilst we would be unable to fund public transport to the new hospital, we would work with local transport providers, including community transport (e.g. Dial-a-ride, volunteer driver schemes, etc) to ensure any new site is as accessible as possible. This could include exploring the re-routing of existing bus routes.

Q: Would the new community hospital be on a main bus route?

A: Transport matters would be a key consideration in any assessment of potential sites. Should the preferred option of a new community hospital be agreed following public consultation, we believe that one of the key criteria by which potential locations are assessed should be that it is easily accessible by car or public transport.

Q: What transport options, other than using one's own car, are available in the Forest of Dean?

A: There are several community transport services in the Forest of Dean. For example, Forest Routes is a Lottery funded community transport partnership in the Forest of Dean. They work to raise awareness of the four community transport providers in the Forest of Dean, to promote their services and to recruit new volunteers to work with them.

Community Transport providers offer reasonably priced fares and a door-to-door service for anyone needing assistance with transport <http://forestroutes.org/>

Public Bus services are provided by Stagecoach; an example of a Forest of Dean route and timetable can be found on the following website:

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/routes/west/30/gloucester-coleford/xsao030.o>

Cost

Q: How much would it cost to build a new hospital?

A: Based on experience elsewhere we estimate the minimum investment required for a new hospital able to meet the needs of the Forest of Dean would be approximately £11m.

Q: Would you need to obtain funding for a new hospital through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI)?

A: No. Should the preferred option of a new community hospital be agreed following public consultation, Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust would fund the new community hospital using NHS capital funds, and, if a new hospital was not located on the site of one of the two existing hospitals, sale of land would contribute towards the cost of a new hospital.

Q: Who owns the land at the Dilke Memorial Hospital and Lydney and District Hospital?

A: The freehold of both community hospitals is owned by Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust, on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Q: How much would it cost to refurbish/rebuild both of the hospitals on the same sites?

A: We estimate that it would cost in excess of £20m to rebuild both of the hospitals on their current sites. It is important to note, however, that the proposal that we are recommending through the consultation reflects the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain some services across two sites in the Forest of Dean.

Q: How much would it cost to maintain the existing hospitals?

A: Our current estimate is that necessary maintenance over the next 10 years would require a minimum investment of over £4 million, with no prospect that either hospital can become fully compliant with current building regulations. Also, even with significant additional investment, we would still not be able to overcome a range of other challenges (set out in the consultation booklet) such as the increasing difficulty of providing services across two sites.

Location and site

Q: If it is agreed to build a new community hospital, where would it be?

A: No decisions have been made. We have developed some criteria which describe the sorts of things that would need to be assessed before recommending a preferred site. The criteria are part of the current public consultation and we are also consulting on the process that would be followed to arrive at a recommendation on a site location. This is all subject to the preferred option of a new community hospital being agreed following public consultation.

Q: Have you already got some sites in mind?

A: We are aware of a number of potential sites across the district. Subject to public consultation and any decision to pursue an option for a new community hospital in the Forest of Dean, there would be a process to assess potential site options. This is set out in the current public consultation booklet.

Q: Could any new community hospital be built on one of the existing community hospital sites?

A: As described above no decision has been made on a preferred site. Subject to consultation and any decision to pursue the preferred option of a new community hospital, existing sites, as well as new sites, could be considered.

Q: What would happen to either, or both, of the existing community hospital sites if a new community hospital was not built on them?

A: We are currently consulting on a preferred option of developing a single new community hospital for the Forest of Dean and not on a preferred location. If the preferred option of a new hospital is agreed after public consultation, existing sites, as well as new sites, could be considered as potential locations. Therefore, we cannot confirm at this stage the future of the current community hospital sites.

We do recognise that this is an important matter and would be subject to future discussions with partners and the public depending on the outcome of the current consultation.

Build and Design

Q: Would a new community hospital definitely be built if the preferred option was agreed?

A: We have a proven track record for planning and building new community hospitals in Gloucestershire (North Cotswolds, Moreton-in-Marsh, The Vale, Dursley and Tewkesbury Community Hospitals) and if the preferred option is agreed following public consultation, we would ensure that it was built within the time period stated.

Q: Would local people and staff be involved in the design of any new community hospital?

A: We would be committed to any new development being designed with the input of our staff and local communities to reflect the unique heritage and character of the Forest of Dean, with environmental sustainability at the core of the design. Working together, we would hope to secure the best possible hospital that our resources could provide.

Q: Would the new building be built to 'green' standards?

A: The Trust's policy is to operate a low carbon, sustainable estate that minimises the use of natural resources. We have in recent years managed a number of projects to improve our heating infrastructure, improve heating controls, increase insulation and upgrade lighting as well as renewable energy projects including PV Solar panels. In addition, water efficiency improvements have included water-efficient taps, showers and low-flush toilets.

The exact same principles would apply to any new hospital building with an intent to implement good sustainability standards that equate to the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Excellent standard. To attain this, the Trust needs to demonstrate high levels of sustainability in energy, health and wellbeing, materials used, management, land use and ecology, pollution, transport, waste and water.

The Trust's new hospitals in Dursley (Vale Hospital) and Moreton-in-Marsh (North Cots Hospital) included extensive planting programmes to enhance biodiversity and dependent upon location, we would aim to adopt a similar approach to any new Forest of Dean hospital.

Clearly the Forest of Dean is a unique environment, however we would also look to ensure the hospital is health promoting – with walking, cycling and healthy lifestyles encouraged whilst working with the local authority to optimise the use of local public transport.

Q: What kind of site would be needed?

A: *Should a decision be made to build a new community hospital for the Forest of Dean, it will be important to consider carefully a number of factors before making a decision on a preferred site/location.*

Within the current consultation booklet, we have taken the opportunity to share some of the criteria we think would be important in making such a decision. In addition to the list in the booklet, we are welcoming views on whether there are other things we should take into account.

Q: What would a new hospital look like?

Here are some examples of existing “new” community hospitals, run by Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust.

North Cotswolds Hospital, Moreton-in-Marsh



Tewkesbury Community Hospital



Tewkesbury Community Hospital



Vale Community Hospital, Dursley



Vale Community Hospital, Dursley



Vale Community Hospital, Dursley

