Major Service Change

A report on NHS Highland’s consultation on the proposed modernisation of community and hospital services in Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross

Summary Report - October 2014
Summary report

Background

NHS Boards are required to work with people\(^1\) when they are considering making changes to a service. The guidance, ‘Informing, Engaging and Consulting People in Developing Health and Community Care Services’\(^2\), outlines the process NHS Boards should follow to involve people in decisions about local services.

When the Scottish Government considers a service change to be ‘major’ the Scottish Health Council has a quality assurance role and reviews the process. This report shares our findings on how NHS Highland involved people in the proposed modernisation of community and hospital services in Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross. It also identifies good practice and suggests learning points for the future.

This report will be considered by NHS Highland when the Board reaches a decision on its proposal for change. NHS Highland plans to discuss its final proposal at the December 2014 Board meeting. If the proposal is supported by the Board it will then go to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing for approval.

Proposal

Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross has a population of approximately 14,680, with the main centres being Portree, Broadford, Kyle, and Lochcarron pictured below.

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\(^1\) “people” refers to health service users, patients, staff, members of the public, carers, volunteers and voluntary organisations

\(^2\) www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2010_04.pdf
NHS Highland’s proposal includes a new modern purpose-built facility ‘Hub’ in Broadford with enhanced diagnostics (X-ray, Ultrasound), Out-of-hours medical cover and all in-patient beds with 24/7 medical cover. The proposed ‘Spoke’ in Portree would continue to have a Minor Injury Unit, Primary Care Emergency Centre and Outpatient services but there would not be any Inpatient services.

**Engagement**

During 2012 and 2013, NHS Highland and local clinical staff met with community councils, local councillors, the area’s two Public Partnership Forums (PPFs), MSPs, council ward forums and other local groups to discuss the current status of the services provided for the area and explain the reasons why change is required.

A local steering group was set up in December 2012 to start to develop the options for new models of service. Invites were sent to partner organisations such as Highland Council, all local councillors, community councils, and groups representing potentially affected people and communities.

Three workshops were held in 2013 with the steering group to develop a long list of options, which included a range of options from having no local hospital services on Skye to rebuilding new hospitals on the existing sites. From this, a short list of three options was identified.

There were around 25 to 35 participants at each event with approximately half coming from community members, patients or service users.

The scoring of options took place using the agreed criteria at the January 2014 workshop. Option 2 (‘Hub’ and ‘Spoke’ model) was selected as the preferred model and a further option appraisal exercise was undertaken to identify where the ‘Hub’ and ‘Spoke’ could be located (April 2014).

In May 2014, the steering group identified four potential sites in Broadford. The consultation survey asked people to indicate if they had a preferred site within Broadford, should the proposal be approved. NHS Highland will use this information to complete the option appraisal on the site.

**Consultation**

The preferred option highlighted a community resource centre and hospital ‘Hub’, based in Broadford and ‘Spoke’ based in Portree.

A three month public consultation on the proposal took place between 19 May and 19 August 2014. During the consultation the steering group took the decision to extend this until 29 August 2014 to allow for additional feedback and responses to be received. NHS Highland reported that it received a total of 2,275 responses to its survey, around 48 letters or emails, and held over 50 meetings and events during the consultation.

NHS Highland also informed us that it received a 65 signature petition asking for the new hospital to be located in Portree.
The main issues raised by people through the consultation included the following:

- Feedback from the north of Skye indicated some strong resistance to the proposed location of the ‘Hub’ in Broadford. This was partly linked to criticism of the membership of the steering group and the process used to identify the proposed location.
- Some concerns relating to travel and access to proposed new ‘Hub’ from north of Skye.
- In Kyle and South West Ross there were positive comments about reduced travel if the ‘Hub’ was located in Broadford.
- Queries about ‘future proofing’ (i.e. how adequate services would be for the future population of the area).
- Clarification on what services are delivered at the sites currently and what could be delivered at the proposed ‘Hub’ and Spoke’.
- The need for Palliative care and care beds was mentioned.

Findings

Based on our review and feedback from local people, we are satisfied that NHS Highland has followed the Scottish Government’s guidance on involving local people in the consultation about the ‘Proposed modernisation of community and hospital services in Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross’.

Overall, feedback received indicated that the majority of people had understood the reasons for change, how the proposal had been developed, felt listened to, and that there had been sufficient opportunity to take part in the consultation. Where people have requested further meetings or information NHS Highland has been responsive.

Areas of good practice identified by the Scottish Health Council

- Steering group members were encouraged to share information and get feedback from local groups and networks during the option appraisal process.
- There was a mail drop of the summary consultation paper to every household and local business which aimed to ensure all local people affected by the proposed change received direct information about the consultation.
- There was ongoing review of the approach taken during the process and in particular the mid-way review allowed for a responsive and proactive approach to influence the remainder of the consultation.
- The walkabouts undertaken in local communities allowed for more targeted engagement and awareness raising in four community settings.
- NHS Highland responded to requests for meetings or further information during the consultation and demonstrated an active consultation process.
- An additional mail drop of the consultation questionnaire took place in August in response to public feedback.
- Information about the consultation was shared through social media on Facebook and Twitter (including the hash tag #skyechat) as part of the engagement and consultation process.
The option development and appraisal process began with a 'blank sheet', and the previous discussions over the last 10-15 years which had attracted local concern did not influence the generation of models for the option appraisal.

**Learning points identified by the Scottish Health Council**

In order to learn from the experience of this process for future service change, NHS Highland should:

- consider where to display posters and leaflets in communities for future consultations
- consider using an ‘at a glance’ table to clarify current service provision against future provision of services, earlier in on the consultation document
- ensure consistent language is used in the meetings and consultation materials when referring to the outcome of the option appraisal
- consider including more detailed information in the summary consultation document about the option appraisal process (for example, who was involved, criteria used and discounted options)
- consider including the consultation questionnaire in the consultation document to encourage participation
- consider using Youtube, as with the recent consultation in Badenoch and Strathspey, to inform the wider community of the review and steering group membership

NHS Highland plans to discuss the proposed recommendation at the December 2014 Board meeting. If the preferred option is supported by the Board it will then go to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing for approval.
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