



# Weston General Hospital Public Meeting

10<sup>th</sup> December 2013

## Report



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# Weston General Hospital Public Meeting Report

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**Public Meeting**  
**To gain public views about Weston General Hospital**  
**10<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

**Background to Weston General Hospital**

Built in 1986, Weston General Hospital has served the North Somerset community for 28 years. It became an NHS Trust (Weston Area Health Trust) in 1991 and provides acute and rehabilitation hospital services and some community services.

Each year the population of North Somerset<sup>1</sup> is increased by approximately 3.3 million day trippers and 375,000 holiday visitors<sup>2</sup> and this has a seasonal effect on Weston General Hospital.

Government policy has decreed that all NHS Trusts should become Foundation Trusts (FT), on their own, as part of an existing FT or in another organisational form by April 2014<sup>3</sup>. Foundation Trust status offers greater budgetary freedom and more accountability to local communities. If a Trust does not achieve FT status, it could be merged with an existing FT or its services could be run and managed by private providers.

Weston Area Health Trust is not able to meet the requirements of Foundation Trust status due to the size of its budgets and workforce. As it is not able to become a Foundation Trust on its own, the alternatives for the Trust are either, to be acquired by another NHS organisation or to find a partner to manage and run the services<sup>4</sup>. If a private hospital provider took over the running of Weston General Hospital it would remain within the NHS, with NHS staff and NHS patients.

There has been a great deal of publicity and speculation in the local and national media about the future of Weston General Hospital and the Healthwatch North

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<sup>1</sup> 202,566 (2011 Census) - <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.waht.nhs.uk/en-GB/About-The-Trust/>

<sup>3</sup> [www.england.nhs.uk](http://www.england.nhs.uk)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.securingthefuture.net/>

Somerset Public meeting was held to give a voice to the public and to seek their views on the future of the hospital.

Healthwatch North Somerset's statutory duty and remit, which is laid out in The Health and Social Care Act 2012, is to provide a voice for people who use health and adult social care services, by:

### **Influencing**

- Giving people an opportunity to have a say about their local health and social care services, including those whose voice isn't usually heard
- Taking public views to the people who make decisions - including having a representative on the local Health and Wellbeing Board
- Feeding issues back to government via Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

### **Signposting**

- Providing information about health and social care services in the local area
- Advising people on where to go for specialist help or information (signposting)
- Helping people make choices and decisions about their care
- Working closely with other groups and organisations in the local area.

## **Setting up the meeting**

The meeting took place on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December from 10.30am-12noon at the Vintage Church, Hughenden Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 2UR and was attended by 30 members of the public.

Weston-super-Mare was chosen as the venue for the meeting as it is the location of the hospital. Consideration was given to the time of the event, and there was an awareness that any chosen time would exclude part of the population. Previous feedback on varying times of future meetings has been acknowledged and Healthwatch North Somerset ensures public meetings vary in terms of time and venue and that if unable to attend, the public are able to let us know their opinions by phone, email, in person, via the Healthwatch North Somerset website, Facebook, Twitter and letter.

The meeting was advertised in the Weston, Worle and Somerset Mercury and was widely advertised through local community websites, community newsletters and social networks. Details of the meeting were emailed to all Healthwatch North Somerset's members and contacts and via Voluntary Action North Somerset's database of approximately 900 contacts. Details were added to the Healthwatch North Somerset website and advertised over several days through social media.

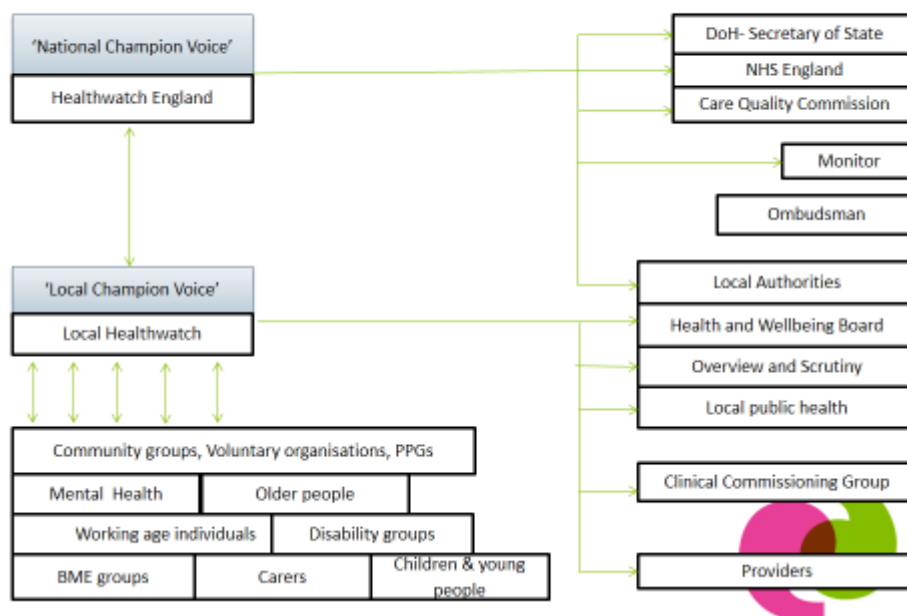
Details of the meeting were added to Eventbrite the online promotion and ticketing service that allows the public to download details of the meeting and inform Healthwatch North Somerset of their intended attendance.

## The Meeting

The meeting was attended by 30 members of the public who were each given a pack which included general information, feedback forms and information about Healthwatch North Somerset.

The meeting began with an explanation of the role Healthwatch and Healthwatch North Somerset and how it strengthens the collective voice of patients and the public.

### Strengthening the collective voice of patients and the public



Georgie Bigg, Chair of Directors, Healthwatch North Somerset, chaired the meeting and led and facilitated the debate about the hospital. The theme of the meeting was to gain a view of the public’s understanding of the process taking place about Weston General Hospital and to ascertain issues of concern and as well as to record public queries and concerns.

The main theme of the meeting centred on the following three questions:

#### We want you to let us know

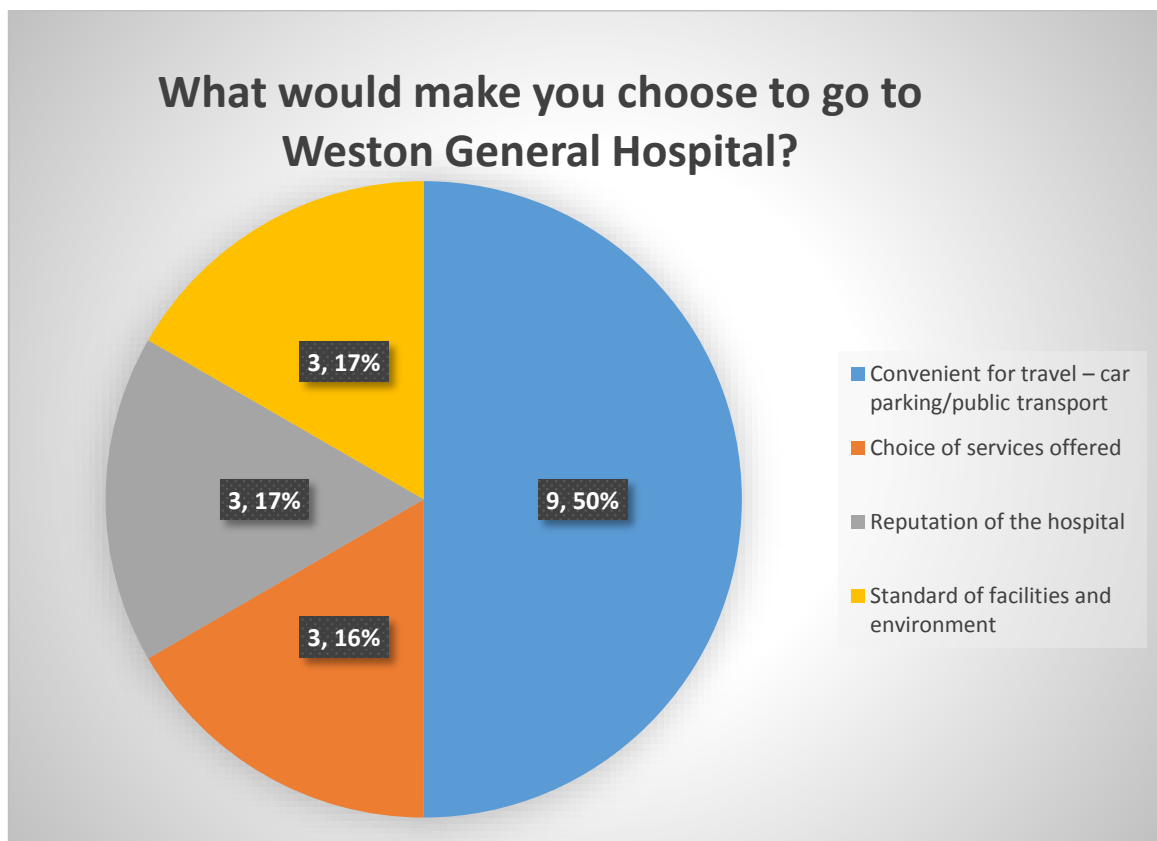
1. What you value about Weston General Hospital?

2. What services you want in Weston General Hospital?
3. What services you don't want in Weston General Hospital?

The members of public attending the meeting discussed and debated these issues. There were a number of questions and comments raised which have been recorded and can be viewed in Appendix 3. Where possible Georgie Bigg and others answered the public questions and those that could not be answered were taken to be raised with Weston Area Health Trust. The responses to the questions will be made available to the public and added to the Healthwatch North Somerset website.

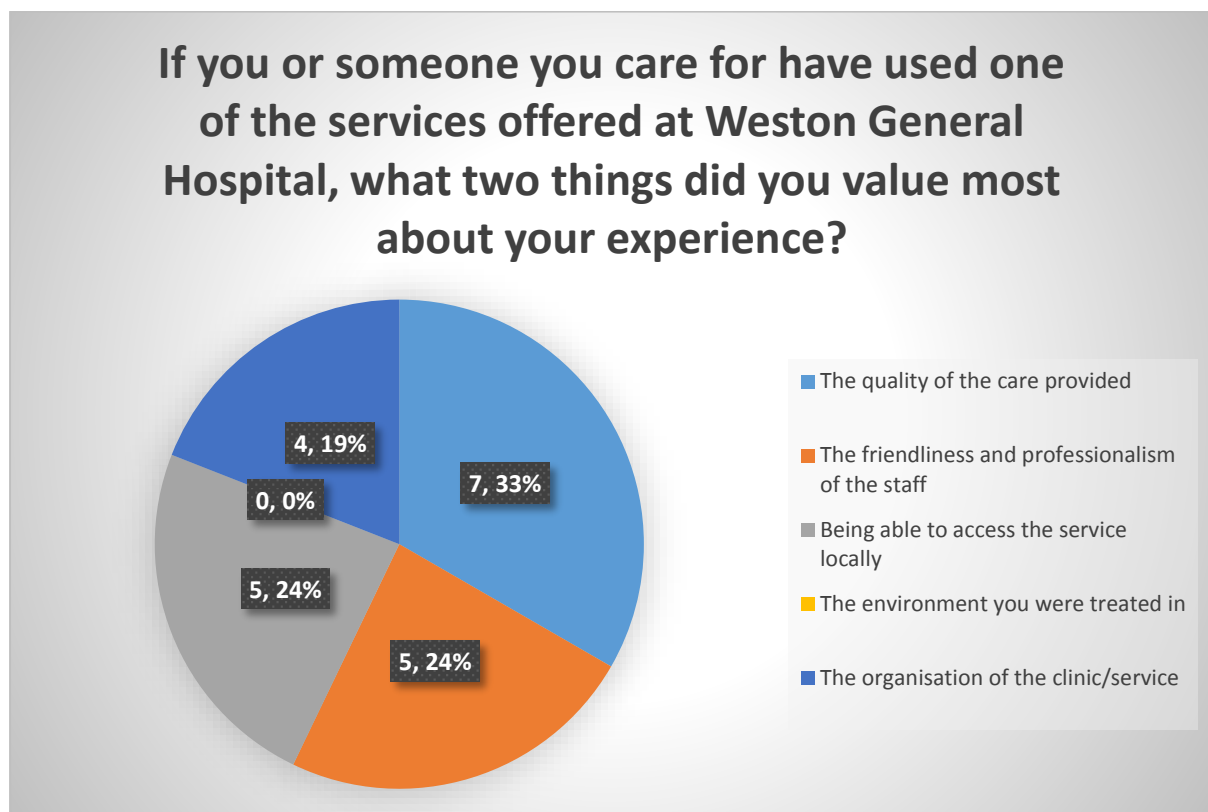
Feedback forms were provided in the packs for the attendees. Thirteen (43%) feedback forms were returned.

Attendees were asked 'What would make you choose to go to Weston General Hospital?' The graph below indicates the responses - the greatest number (9 - 50%) would choose to go to Weston Hospital because it was convenient for travel.



Attendees were asked 'If you, or someone you care for, have used one of the services offered at Weston General Hospital what two things did you value most

about your experience?' The majority (7 - 33%) valued the quality of the care provided. None of the respondents indicated that the most important thing they valued at Weston General Hospital was the environment they were treated in.



## Conclusion

It was clear from the meeting that the public did not fully understand what is happening at Weston General Hospital and that there was a great deal of misinformation and concern about the future of the hospital. Despite a wide range of information disseminated by Weston Area Health Trust (WAHT) including a dedicated website (<http://www.securingthefuture.net/>) it was evident that this information had not reached the public effectively. It was also clear that the public value Weston General Hospital and sought reassurance about its future.

# Appendix 1

## Further information

For further information on Weston General Hospital

<http://www.waht.nhs.uk/>

<http://www.securingthefuture.net/>

<http://www.northsomersetccg.nhs.uk/>

<http://www.nhs.uk>

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/directory/ra301>

<http://protectournhs.wordpress.com/tag/weston-general-hospital/>



## Appendix 2



### Feedback Form - Weston General Hospital

**What would make you choose to go to Weston General Hospital?  
(Please circle)**

1. Convenient for travel – car parking/public transport **9**
2. Choice of services offered **3**
3. Reputation of the hospital **3**
4. Standard of facilities and environment **3**

**If you, or someone you care for, have used one of the services offered at Weston General Hospital what two things did you value most about your experience? (Please circle)**

1. The quality of the care provided **7**
2. The friendliness and professionalism of the staff **5**
3. Being able to access the service locally **5**
4. The environment you were treated in **0**
5. Experience of family/friends who were with you, or visited you **0**
6. The organisation of the clinic/service **4**

**What is your age? (Please circle)**

**Under 18 / 18-24 / 25-34 / 35-54 **x5** / 55-74 **x4** / over 75 **x4****

**What is your gender? **M x4 F x7****

**In which area of North Somerset do you live?**

**Weston-super-Mare **x5****

**Wrington **x1****

**Locking **x1****

**Worle **x1****

**Backwell **x1****

Clevedon x2

Nailsea x1

## Comments

- 👉 I would rather have less services that are excellent than more services that aren't good
- 👉 We need to understand the funding constraints
- 👉 In general, patients views on what services should be provided should be moderated by clinical opinion
- 👉 The most important thing is to have a hospital to serve the town of Weston super Mare and surrounding area - which will provide good service to the population and also provide emergency services which can be a matter of life and death to the older generation
- 👉 Value a local hospital dealing with routine operations across the range
- 👉 Need more education eg don't go to A&E for minor things you can treat yourself
- 👉 Educate people so that patients understand that specialist operations and treatment will have to be dealt with in larger centres ie Bristol
- 👉 My daughter has received access to NHS provision through GP referral to community paediatrics for assessments for ADD and has ongoing assessment for autism. Process taken over 4 years and still waiting for diagnosis. Due to lack of medical support we have failed to get her the statement of special educational needs that is absolutely necessary for both her school and future education. We really need help form the community paediatricians
- 👉 Having a hospital near to home is important although if special treatment is needed eg heart, it is better to go to a specialist hospital like Bristol heart unit
- 👉 Fight for all services
- 👉 North Somerset underfunded, we need a bigger slice of money
- 👉 Concerns of CCG funding and support
- 👉 We need the facts of running costs of WAHT and Clevedon
- 👉 We need the hospital
- 👉 When is the report for the intensive care unit being presented
- 👉 Travel Concerns
- 👉 Where will the extra beds be placed
- 👉 Concerns for elderly treatment and lack of transport
- 👉 Ask where North Somerset patients go with loss of beds at the PFI Southmead
- 👉 IT Communication Weston cannot reach IT info from Clevedon GPs

## Appendix 3

# Public Meeting about Weston General Hospital 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013

## Public Questions and Comments

- Q** How does the current situation stand at Weston Hospital with regards to Dermatology and Neurology outpatients?
- There were two consultants providing cover who are no longer doing so?
- Where will these patients have to travel to if they cannot be seen at Weston?
- Q** I have heard there are 15 empty consultant posts at Weston Hospital, is this true? What is the plan to resolve this and how is it affecting services?
- Q** If a private company do take over the running of Weston Hospital how will this affect current staff contracts and benefits?
- Q** Mr Bahakri who is the elderly care consultant at Weston Hospital will be retiring in January, is there a replacement consultant yet?
- Will the new consultant have the same level of local area knowledge as Mr Bahakri?
- Q** Is the ITU unit going to be closed?
- If it is not going to be closed why did the planned refurbishment not go ahead?
- Q** If Weston Hospital is taken over by a private company how will the budgeting stream differ to the NHS?

**Q** If Weston Hospital is bought by a private organisation, how can the public ask questions of them as they will not be a public body?

**Q** I am worried about the future of Weston Hospital is it all going to be sold to a private company?

**A** No decisions have been made yet and this is still in the early stages, there are a number of bidders NHS and private and they will all follow the bidding process. More information about this can be found on the 'Securing the future' website.

**Q** There should be more of a focus on elderly care and long term dementia care.

**Q** I have heard that the group that run Clevedon Hospital are a private company?

**A** The people that run Clevedon Hospital are a Community Interest Company and they put all profits back into the organisation.

**Q** I am aware that the CCG received £350 million in funding last year, this year they only received £255 million and the rest was given to the company running Clevedon Hospital. The company running Clevedon hospital also have to pay VAT on all their purchases.

**Q** Why do Weston Hospital have to be a foundation trust?

**A** They do not have the capital and currently have a lot of inherited debt.

**Q** Is Weston Hospital short of money due to PFI funding?

**A** No the funding received in North Somerset is lower than elsewhere in the country.

**Q** Can you guarantee there will always be a Weston General Hospital?

**A** Cannot guarantee that.

- Q** This all sounds like a bureaucratic nightmare. If you want us to answer the questions about the services at Weston Hospital then we need a list of all the services currently offered and what they do.
- Q** This sounds like the politicians have already made up their minds. What is the point of giving our views?
- A** Nothing has been decided yet and we need to focus on getting people's views on the current situation.
- Q** I can see this is an emotionally charged subject. To move forward we have to move away from emotion and gain the factual information needed. In the modern world paper documents are becoming redundant and social networking is the way forward to encourage change. The question still remains though will anyone listen?
- Q** Two GP surgeries and a walk in centre have been closed in Weston making the closest GP surgery for some, a considerable distance. Do you know if A&E at the hospital is taking the strain of this?
- A** There are statistics available online about number of patients at Weston Hospital.
- Q** If a private company did take over Weston Hospital they would not charge for any services they deliver. Even though it will not be full privatisation of the hospital these are all steps towards this goal. In Weston the demand on A&E could be reduced by educating people that they do not need medical attention for coughs and colds.
- Q** Weston Hospital has been inspected 9 times in 9 months. How do they get any time to act on the reports from this?
- Q** The GP surgery at Weston Hospital has been closed now and I have heard they will be bringing the Red Cross in to triage patients at A&E?
- A** Answered by Age Concern - The Red Cross will be at the hospital to help elderly and venerable patients returning to their homes.

**Q** The NHS is becoming like the dentist. I do not want to lose any of the services currently offered at Weston Hospital.

## Appendix 4

### Advert

# *Your Voice Counts*

Have your say on

## Weston General Hospital

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December

10.30am - 12pm

At Vintage Community Church, 25 Hughenden Road,  
Weston-super-Mare, BS23 2UR

Healthwatch North Somerset your independent consumer  
champion for health and social care services want to make sure  
your views are heard.

To book your place tel:- 01275 851400 or email  
[contact@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk](mailto:contact@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk)

If you are not able to attend the meeting you will still be able to  
share your views with us, contact us for more details.

 **healthwatch**  
North Somerset



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