



South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group  
Pomona House  
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Torquay  
TQ2 7FF

Councillor Chris Lewis  
Chair  
Torbay Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 January 2019

Via email: [chris.lewis@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:chris.lewis@torbay.gov.uk)

Dear Councillor Lewis,

Further to our attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 October 2018, the committee requested an update on the proposed CCG merger following the engagement and second vote with our South Devon and Torbay Practices.

We visited a number of individual practices between 16 October and 22 November and hosted an all practice meeting on 28 November at Newton Abbot Racecourse.

During these meetings, several concerns were raised which we were able to discuss and provide assurance around. The main themes of these concerns were:

- **Loss of local voice and relationship with the CCG.** In South Devon and Torbay we have enjoyed a strong relationship with our GP practices, main hospital provider and Local Authority colleagues. In order to maintain this relationship and the voice of the local GP within a proposed wider CCG we have taken several measures. Firstly we have a dedicated team within the CCG whose role will have a predominant focus on South Devon and Torbay, working with our local practices and providers and continuing that close link and working relationship. Secondly, each of our Executive Directors will have a particular geography as well as their overall portfolio that they will be responsible for, including South Devon and Torbay, allowing that strong relationship between the Executive and local area to continue. And thirdly we are committed to structuring the CCG and wider STP in such a way that it can operate both at the 'whole Devon' level but also within local 'place' systems and smaller 'neighbourhoods' such as Market towns and local communities. Getting this structure right will enable us to gain all the benefits of functioning on a larger pan-Devon footprint whilst still being able to be locally responsive and adaptable to particular community and demographic needs.
- **Financial implications of merging the CCGs.** Our local practices are aware that both CCGs face significant financial challenges and sought assurance that merging of the CCGs would not exacerbate that challenge or disadvantage South Devon and Torbay. We acknowledged the financial pressures that the whole of Devon is facing and that we need to do everything we can to ensure we maximise the funding available for Devon whilst being as efficient as we can in our spending. Given current funding formulas our calculations suggest that were South Devon and Torbay to remain as a single CCG then its year on year growth in funding would be less than if it were part of a larger Devon CCG. This is due to how current levels of funding for South Devon and Torbay exceed the

**NHS organisations involved:**

Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group  
South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group

amount determined by the fair shares formula for our population, an excess which becomes less pronounced and therefore has less impact on growth when combined with the NEW Devon funding allocation. We are also confident that we can make significant savings on CCG running costs by combining the two organisations, allowing more funds to be passed on to front line services.

- **Potential loss of key services for the patients of South Devon and Torbay.** There was a view that real progress has been made in the services that are provided for the people of South Devon and Torbay and that becoming a larger CCG would potentially slow some of that local progress. As described above, we want to continue to develop services and opportunities at the local level as well as having a wider Devon approach which would allow each local area to benefit from learning and good practice from other areas and we would ensure that we structure ourselves in a way that enables this. Concerns were also raised around the secondary care services that are currently provided locally. Recent experience has shown us that looking for local solutions to local service provision is not sufficient to provide safe and resilient services and a number of specialist services such as dermatology and rheumatology have required a pan-Devon solution. Therefore to provide the specialist services that are needed for the local population into the future we need to find county-wide solutions that involve partnership working between our various providers and we are best placed to commission such services as a single Devon CCG.

Following the meeting on 28 November we held a further member practice vote, the results of which were strongly in favour of merger:

21 in favour of merger

6 against the merger

2 no votes

We feel this result, along with the similar result in NEW Devon, gives us the mandate to proceed with merger and therefore submitted our intent to NHS England who confirmed support of our application on 14 December 2018.

We believe that becoming a single Devon CCG puts us in the best position to commission the best quality services and make the best use of the resources we have available for the whole population of Devon and by continuing to address the concerns raised by our GP members and holding to the commitments we have made we are confident that we can do so without losing all the good work, relationships and opportunities we have in South Devon and Torbay.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Paul Johnson  
Clinical Chair  
South Devon and Torbay CCG