



**Alison Bulman**  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

I write on behalf of Powys County Council having collated the views of staff members and elected councillors on the Future Fit proposals.

We welcome the opportunity to provide our views for your consideration on how best to meet the needs of the population over the coming years. As a rural Local Authority neighbouring Shropshire with a population of 133,000 we believe it essential that the needs of Welsh communities using services in England are fully considered in the planning and delivery of those services.

Acknowledging the need for a whole-system of care model that includes primary, community, mental health and social care, as well as third sector and community stakeholders, there are two main components to our response. These are quality and access.

Quality:

We believe that the rationale for the proposed changes place quality at the centre and this is welcomed. The understanding that specialists will be more available in one centre of excellence supports the plan to have a dedicated emergency care site in Shrewsbury and we would support this approach. Therefore, we strongly support Option 1 as set out in the consultation documents.

This will also support workforce planning and ensure that capable and well trained staff are available and that the service is sustainable.

Access:

- Distance to services:  
Ensuring that services are accessible to the population of Powys is essential. Guaranteeing that emergency care is available within an hour's drive from the most rural parts of Powys is challenging and we recognise that centralising the emergency function at Shrewsbury would be the best of the two options in order to ensure access for the people of Powys as well as Shropshire.

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However, such a significant barrier to access (40+ miles for some mid-Powys residents to their nearest acute hospital) can lead to adverse social, psychological or clinical impact to communities already facing access deprivation. Informal carers and next of kin will have significant distances to visit hospital patients.

While we agree that the first option of the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital being the emergency care site is preferable to the people of Powys, we also acknowledge that these distance to travel can be challenging for informal carers and next of kin who need to visit patients at Telford.

- **Cultural Appropriateness and the Welsh Language:**  
We also would like to take the opportunity to encourage any new development which aims to serve the population of Powys to be culturally appropriate and that all signage and public information is provided bilingually (Welsh and English). This should be supported by language awareness training to staff. For first language Welsh speakers this is a clinical need, especially where there is a cognitive or sensory impairment.

An admission to hospital can be a disorientating time. If an individual's first language is Welsh, their secondary language skills may be further impaired during a time of illness. This can make it difficult to communicate their needs and wishes if other Welsh language speakers are not available.

#### **Mitigation for Consideration:**

In order to address the issues around distance for patients and carers from Powys to Shropshire base hospitals we would wish to see greater flexibility in the provision of services, including the much greater emphasis on outreach services into Mid Wales and the use of digital care solutions that help improve access:

- All plans need to be coordinated with plans being developed by Powys County Council and the Powys Teaching Health Board for some planned care to be based in Newtown, within Powys itself.
- Development of greater consultant outreach in to Powys would make the situation easier for Powys residents.
- Also, there needs to be a commitment to develop Technology Enabled Care and Medicine through telemedicine. For example, increasingly people should expect to have their pre- and post-operative assessment services delivered as close to home as possible and be able to access their consultation via telemedicine through a base in north Powys.
- All developments need to be culturally appropriate and include bilingual signage, information, with Welsh language aware and trained staff available where possible.

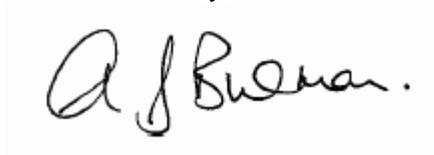
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It is worth noting that the retention of some critical services at Shrewsbury, such as the Lingen Davies Cancer Centre and the return of the women and children's inpatient services, as well as acute stroke services is welcomed.

In conclusion, therefore, Powys County Council supports Option 1 and opposes Option 2 due to extended time and distance for definitive emergency care for time-dependant conditions. However, we recognise that effective implementation of Option 1 does include some significant challenges and further actions are required in order to mitigate these.

Thank you again for providing the opportunity to feed in to this consultation. We look forward to hearing about the final decisions made.

Yours sincerely,



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