

The future of the Stapleford Walk-in Centre

Submission from Anna Soubry, MP for Broxtowe

This submission reflects the views of my constituents and my own views as to why the Walk-in Centre should not close.

I have explained my view that the services it currently provides could be extended. I have also included a number of issues which I would be grateful if the PCT could address as a matter of some urgency. Finally, if the Walk-in Centre is to close then I have made some suggestions as to how the PCT might ensure the invaluable services the Walk-in Centre currently provides are not lost to the communities it serves.

Since the matter was put out for public consultation I have been contacted by many of my constituents; not one has said they want to lose the Walk-in Centre. I believe the following quotes, from users, speak more eloquently in support of the continuation of the centre than I can write. I should add that the following is a selection from the many emails I have received:

"Following surgery on my back to remove a melanoma a year ago at the Day Care Centre OMC I needed to have my dressings changed on a daily basis. At this time my surgery nurse was involved in administering Flu jabs and was unable to carry this vital service for me for 5 weeks. I went round to the Walk in centre where I was ministered to for nearly 4and1/2 months everyday. The nurses and reception staff were outstanding fitting in with my work schedule and offering the best care I could have hoped for."

"I fully support your desire to keep the centre in Staple ford where parking is free and plentiful. The OMC location may be better in offering extended services but is already over crowded and parking is poor."

From a constituent in Chilwell:

"I would be very sorry to see the centre closed. I have been able to use it for diabetic eyetests and hearing tests. Whereas parking at the OMC is almost impossible (all disabled places are usually full) and the Ropewalk is difficult, I have never had trouble parking at Stapleford. Even if I go to the OMC very early I am always worried that I shall miss an appointment. Being disabled I cannot use the normal parking facilities. Having incurred the substantial expenditure in building Stapleford, it seems crazy to close it"

From a parent whose GP surgery is in Chilwell:

"I am one of those that use it for my 6 year old son. As you would know, kids can fall ill or get minor injuries at any time. The GP surgery I am registered with will not entertain any bookings late in the day to see a GP. Booking an appointment can be a week or two usually and same day appointments usually need to be done by the early part of the morning."

Another Chilwell resident wrote:

"As it stands, if we need a same day appointment, we have to call as early as possible in the morning. After a certain time, we are normally told there are no available appointments and to either try calling the next day or make an appointment which could be 1 week or two later"

A GP from Derbyshire sent me his comments as follows:

"I am a GP on the Derbyshire side of the fence although I am a constituent of yours and indeed about 20% of my Practice's patients are also yours so to speak .I haven't met anyone yet who thinks that moving the Walk-in is a good idea"

One Toton resident stated:

"I was shocked to hear about the closure of the Stapleford Walk-in Centre. I believe this is an invaluable service than my family and I have used on many occasions. It provides a fantastic alternative to the GP or the A&E because it is quick to access and local which is a necessity when you are working parent and GPs are ever increasingly difficult to get quick appointments for around work."

"It is a shame for this facility to close, But one thing that has put people off using it more (myself included) is that if you go in with a problem e.g. earache there is no-one who can prescribe for you and you still have to see your own doctor."

"It s handy not only for Stapleford but also Sandiacre, Long Eaton, Toton, Chilwell, Attenborough, Bramcote and Beeston as well as many places in Broxtowe area."

The emails and comments I have received have led me to conclude that the Walk-in Centre is highly valued for the following reasons:

1. Users like the fact they do not need to make an appointment.
2. The opening hours are convenient
3. Users with an injury that requires treatment or an illness or complaint that may be serious and requires immediate medical attention, though not an emergency ambulance call out, have no doubt the walk-in centre is a genuine alternative to A and E at the OMC.
4. Users who require treatment or assurance in relation to a minor injury or illness have no doubt the walk in centre is a genuine alternative to seeing their GP.
5. Users who require continuing medical attention, such as the replacement of dressings and bandages find the Walk-in Centre a better option than the OMC.
6. The walk in centre is situated in a pleasant and convenient building.
7. Users speak highly of the nurses who work at the walk in centre.

I have been disappointed that there has not been disclosure of the alleged costs of providing the Walk-in service at Stapleford; it would be grossly unfair if the costs of the Care Centre PFI are included in a disproportionate way within the budget for the Walk-in Centre. However, I welcome the meeting to be held on Wednesday 16th March which I will make every effort to attend.

I also believe it is imperative that we should be fully informed as to how any money saved from closing the Walk-in Centre would be re-invested in the provision of health services for the people of Stapleford and its environs.

I believe there is a good argument to expand the services provided by the Walk-In Centre, notably the restoration of the bandaging service and the enabling of nurses to prescribe in accordance with existing practice.

The service is clearly used by people from outside the Stapleford area. I have asked and was assured I would be given the basis upon which the PCT has calculated the location of current users and I would welcome that information as soon as possible. I believe more publicity and information about the Stapleford Walk-in Centre would see a rise in users from the west of Nottingham. I believe this would be of considerable benefit to the OMC and would like to know the views of Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust on this

matter.

If Nottinghamshire PCT decides to close the Walk-in Centre, notwithstanding the views and wishes of the people who use and value it, then I believe it is imperative the community is given cast iron guarantees that the services it provides will not be lost and the provision of those services must be put in place before the closure.

I believe that, in particular, we need guarantees from the North West Consortium that GP surgeries will offer a full practice nurse service, that their opening hours will be convenient for people, especially working parents, and that their appointment booking system will reflect a more flexible and convenient appointment system for both GP's and nurses. Finally, I welcome the positive way the PCT is looking at strengthening the future of the Care Centre in Stapleford, which houses the Walk-in Centre. I have no doubt that the flexible approach shown by the PCT will encourage more groups and organisations to move into the building.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Soubry MP