

RHU & SHANDON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

By email to

Shona Robison,

cc
Jackie Baillie
Michael Russell
Patrick Harvie
Maurice Corry
David Alston. Chair NHS Highland
John Brown CBE. Chair Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Jean Grant CEO Greater Glasgow & Clyde
R&S CC and Lomond North Cllrs

from

Jean Cook Secretary

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GP out of hours services at the Vale of Leven Hospital

On behalf of Rhu and Shandon Community Council we note the increasing number of occasions when the above service, contracted by a Service Level Agreement between NHS Highland and Greater Glasgow and Clyde, is not available to the locality. The changes being implemented by the new Integrated Joint Boards require a safe infrastructure to keep patients at home and out of the expensive hospital system. There have been repeated assurances from both yourself and the now First Minister that the Vale of Leven Hospital would remain functioning in its present form.

We remind you of the following five points:

1. The size of the population served, the demographics and significant deprivation levels.
2. The difficulty in travelling both to the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) and the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital (QEUEH)
3. The presence of a major naval base, with the prospect of an increase of 1500 personnel and their families.
4. The current Minor Injuries Unit and Medical Assessment Unit are attended by over 20,000 patients annually, effectively reducing the demands on A&E departments at the already overstretched RAH and QEUEH.
5. The ambulance service is already challenged and would be unable to cope with increased demand.

We understand the staffing difficulty caused by the shortage of GPs and an attitudinal change in some younger GPs. It is the duty of government and its devolved services in education and the NHS to read and understand future demands in health care and changing means of provision. Removal of funded medical training has resulted in the present lack of GPs and the recently announced increase in student intake will take eight to ten years to address the problem.

We believe that there must be a long term research based programme to provide appropriate clinical services, not a reactive short term decision. These services should be a combination of centralised specialist treatment with readily accessible local care.

It is essential that the initial concept of Primary and Secondary health care service, available to all round the clock, is maintained for the patients in our widespread area. They have every right to expect the continuation of local out of hours service currently provided at the Vale of Leven Hospital by local GPs and supported by consultants.

We would appreciate your confirmation that you will continue to make strenuous efforts to ensure this.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Cook.