



Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Directorate

Public Health

West Offices

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York YO1 6GA

The Rt. Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
 Secretary of State for Health
 Department of Health
 Richmond House
 79 Whitehall
 London
 SW1A 2NS

Our Ref: KS/SS

Date: 13 January 2017

Email: Sharon.stoltz@york.gov.uk

Dear Secretary of State for Health

Access to NHS Services

I am writing to you following the Council meeting on the 15 December 2016 where the following Motion was passed:

Access to NHS Services (moved by Cllr S Barnes)

‘Council notes:

- *The financial crisis in health facing the NHS and City of York Council, whose public health funding has seen cutbacks in recent years;*
- *The decision of NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to ration access to NHS services by imposing conditions for surgery on some who smoke or are obese;*
- *The expert clinical view put forward by the Royal College of Surgeons and comments from its President, Clare Marx, who has labelled Vale of York CCG’s policy as ‘frankly shocking’.*

Council agrees with the CCG’s aim to reduce levels of obesity and smoking prevalence among York residents, and recognises that individuals themselves must play a part and take responsibility for looking after their own health. But Council believes the recent CCG policy change regarding the provision of surgery to patients who are obese, or who smoke, sets a dangerous precedent. A change to restrict and ration health services to specific groups of people is unfair.

Furthermore, Council believes this policy threatens to exacerbate existing health inequalities.

Council resolves:

- *To write to the Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Sir Simon Stevens Head of NHS England and Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health objecting to this decision in the strongest possible terms;*

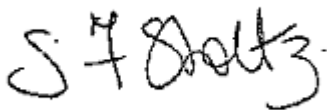
- *To request that the Executive commissions the Director of Public Health to assess the impact of this policy, including the impact on health inequalities, reporting back to Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee, with options recommended to Executive for what the council can do to mitigate its impact on health inequalities.'*

Whilst the Council is supportive of the principles in the Vale of York CCG's Prevention and Better Health Strategy, and welcomes efforts to encourage residents to stop smoking and maintain a healthy weight, there are significant concerns amongst elected Members that the impact of the BMI and smoking thresholds for elective surgery described in the CCG 'Optimising Outcomes from All Elective Surgery Commissioning Statement' will be felt most by those residents living in deprived communities and are, therefore, unfair.

Although the overall prevalence of smoking and obesity are lower in York than in many other parts of the country we know that there are significant inequalities in smoking and obesity within the local population with a clear link to deprivation. Cuts to the Council's public health budget have resulted in a reduction in the services available to support residents with smoking cessation or weight management and there are concerns that support will not be available in a timely way for those patients affected by the CCG policy. Thus there is a real possibility that the policy will have, what I am sure, is an unintended outcome of exacerbating health inequalities across the City of York and therefore the Council has no other option but to object to the policy.

I would be grateful if you could note the Council's position and respond accordingly.

Yours sincerely



Sharon Stoltz
Director of Public Health