

Belfast Trust 2017/18 Savings Plan

The aim of this consultation is to obtain views from stakeholders and the Trust would be most grateful if you would respond by completing this questionnaire. Please answer each question by writing your comments in the space provided. The closing date for this consultation is 5 October 2017 and we need to receive your completed questionnaire on or before that date. You can respond to the consultation document by e-mail, letter or fax as follows:

Chief Executive

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, c/o Corporate Communications, 1st Floor, Nore Villa,
Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, BELFAST, BT8 8BH

Tel: 028 9504 4500

Mobile Text: 0782 514 6432

E-mail: stakeholdercomms@belfasttrust.hscni.net

So that we can acknowledge receipt of your comments please fill in your name and address or that of your organisation. You may withhold this information if you wish but we will not then be able to acknowledge receipt of your comments.

Name:	Eamonn Donaghy
Position:	Chief Executive
Organisation (if appropriate):	Age Sector Platform
Address:	Merrion Business Centre
58 Howard Street, Belfast BT1 6PJ	
Click here to enter text.	

I am responding: as an individual

(please tick)

on behalf of an organisation

1. This document sets out a range of proposals to contribute to the Trust share of a regional £70m in-year savings plan.

Question: Do you consider that the Trust has identified reasonable actions to deliver our share of this regional savings plan given the timescale available and principles of safety, deliverability, impact and strategic direction?

Age Sector Platform understands that Belfast HSCT has been tasked with finding savings of £26.3m in year as its share of the £70m total. We also accept that the Trust has attempted to minimise the impact on services and patients by identifying “efficiencies” of £13m that will have “no or low impact” on front line services.

The reality is that prioritising urgent cases for operations and other treatments over “routine” and “non urgent” cases means that people in the non urgent category will continue to be in pain and will suffer reduced quality of life. Hip replacements for example may be classed as non urgent, but for a patient who has been waiting 6 months for an operation and who will have this wait extended as a result of these proposals, this will result in a longer period in considerable pain with reduced mobility. For many older people in particular this will have significant impact on their quality of life and mental health. This will in turn place demands of the services of the Trust in the longer term.

It is our opinion that the range of proposals will have a significantly negative impact on the principles of safety, deliverability and impact that the Trust refers to above.

2. The Trust has identified that if implemented some of these proposed actions are likely to have some impact on the delivery of front line services.

Question: Do you consider that there are any alternative proposals that could be brought forward that would deliver the equivalent reduced spend in-year, taking account of the principles set out in this document? If so please describe the nature of these alternative proposals below.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

These cuts will clearly impact on individuals and families that are already amongst the most vulnerable in our society and who are already suffering from lengthy waiting lists, reduced care packages and inadequate domiciliary care. As we enter winter, as the largest 'consumers' of health care, the impact of these savings on older people will be compounded and we believe that they constitute a very real threat to life.

In the document outlining its proposals BHSCT states its intention to reduce access to domiciliary packages by two thirds. In the Trust's own words, **“this will have greater impact on older people as the majority of packages are required by older people and there is greater turnover of packages within this client cohort”**

It was very evident at the consultation meetings that Trust staff do not consider these proposals to be either palatable or reasonable and staff were at pains to point out that vulnerable people will suffer as a result. This is clearly an unacceptable situation and on behalf of its membership Age Sector Platform calls on BHSCT to advise the Department of Health that it is unable to implement these proposals.

3. In setting out these proposals for spend reduction in-year, the Trust has indicated the expected impact on service delivery.

Question: Can you propose any further actions that could be taken to manage the risks presented due to the impact of the implementation of these proposals? Please set out your response below.

Click here to enter text.

Age Sector Platform does not believe that we are qualified to advise BHSCT staff on the most effective ways to manage its resources. We believe that the impact of these proposals will have a negative impact on the safety, quality of life and mental health of BHSCT service users, particularly those who are amongst the most vulnerable in society. We consider that the only sensible action to be taken is, as stated above, to advise the Deptt for Health that the Trust is unable to implement these proposals on basis of the threat they will pose to the most vulnerable people in so who are already feeling the impact of contractions in health and s care.

4. An outcome of initial equality screening considerations is available in Appendix 1.

Question: Please detail below your views on the assessed impact of the proposals and any other potential impacts you feel we should consider.

Age Sector Platform would ask BHSCT to ensure that it has operated within the guidelines of its own equality scheme when drawing up these proposals,

5. The Rural Needs Act places a duty on public authorities, including government departments, to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services.

Question: Do you have any evidence to suggest that the proposals within our proposals would create an adverse differential impact

Click here to enter text.

6. General comments

Please provide any other comments

[Click here to enter text.](#)

At successive sittings of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament since 2011, access to health and social care has been one of the top concerns of older people. An online survey completed in May 2015 by almost 700 older people revealed that:

- 89% of respondents consider that waiting times for non-emergency treatment and care are getting longer
- 76% of respondents do not believe time allocated for domiciliary care is adequate

It is evident the savings proposed by BHSCT will exacerbate this situation further. As a membership organisation with 34 member groups and over 100 individual members Age Sector Platform believes that it has a duty to reflect the concerns of its members in terms of these savings proposals.

We note that although these savings are described as “temporary”, the reality is that when money has been removed from a budget it often becomes difficult to reinstate it and temporary cuts become permanent. We believe that there is a high risk of that scenario happening here. We do not believe that the timeframe for the consultation process is adequate and have noted with dismay the lack of adequate notice and publicity that has been provided for consultation meetings. This has resulted in meetings being populated by representatives of the various Unions, Trust staff and other public sector representatives with inadequate numbers of the general public in attendance.

We note that BHSCT staff have themselves commented that these savings proposals, if brought into force, will impact on the lives of people who are already vulnerable and at risk. Listening to these opinions of health practitioners, it is simply unacceptable that the Dept of Health can consider implementing them and we call on the Board of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to communicate this in the strongest possible terms to the Department of Health.

Before you submit your response, please read the following section on Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the confidentiality of responses to public consultation exercises.

Trust Response and Freedom of Information Act (2000)

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust will publish an anonymised summary of the responses received to our consultation process. However, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, particular responses may be disclosed on request, unless an exemption(s) under the legislation applies.

Under the FOIA anyone has the right to request access to information held by public authorities; the Belfast Trust is such a public body. Trust decisions in relation to the release of information that the Trust holds are governed by various pieces of legislation, and as such the Trust cannot automatically consider responses received as part of any consultation process as exempt. However, confidentiality issues will be carefully considered before any disclosures are made.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.