

Ned Sharratt
Assistant Clerk
Public Petitions Committee
c/o Public Petitions Clerks
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH EH99 1SP

Date 25 June 2015
Your Ref Petition PE1568
Our Ref TD / amcm / ac

Dear Mr Sharratt

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1568 (FUNDING, ACCESS AND PROMOTION OF THE NHS CENTRE FOR INTEGRATIVE CARE)

Thank you for your letter dated 10 June 2015 seeking NHS Lothian's view of the petition relating to access to the NHS Centre for Integrative Care (NHS CIC).

NHS Lothian has not made a decision to cease referral to NHS CIC which appears to be the belief of the Public Petitions Committee as outlined in your communication. The background information to the petition published on the Scottish Parliament website is incorrect in stating 'In recent years, three Health Boards decided to cease referring patients to the CIC' and 'NHS Lothian referrals ceased in March 2014'. The statement made by Catherine Hughes, Patient Representative at the Public Petitions Committee meeting on 9 June 2015 as outlined in Official Report of the Committee is also incorrect when it was stated NHS Lothian ceased referral.

NHS Lothian's response to the petition provides details of our homeopathy public consultation and subsequent decision by NHS Lothian Board as requested.

In 2012, NHS Lothian undertook a three month public consultation which asked 'Should NHS Lothian pay for homeopathy?' In total 3,720 responses were received to the consultation questionnaire. The outcome from respondents who resided in Lothian was:

- 74% (1,930) thought NHS Lothian should not pay for homeopathy
- 25% (664) thought NHS Lothian should continue to pay for homeopathy
- 1% (32) were undecided

Prior to the outcome of the public consultation being considered by NHS Lothian Board, information was sought from NHS CIC relating to activity associated with Lothian referrals. During 2012/13, activity at NHS CIC relating to Lothian referrals equated to 0.44% of all outpatient activity and 2.46% of all day case and inpatient activity at the Centre.

NHS Lothian Board made a decision in June 2013 to withdraw provision of the Lothian homeopathy service, the local service closed on 31 March 2014. However, as NHS Lothian has a rolling service level agreement with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde which includes provision of the services offered at NHS CIC, it was agreed referrals to NHS CIC could continue to be supported, if clinically appropriate. NHS Lothian does not have a separate service level agreement with NHS CIC.

Communication was sent to all general practices in Lothian to confirm the withdrawal of the Lothian homeopathy service from 1 April 2014 and advised NHS Lothian would continue to consider referral to NHS CIC and indicated general practitioners should submit referrals to NHS Lothian's Safehaven office.

NHS Lothian continues to routinely support referral to NHS CIC seeking homeopathy or Mistletoe Therapy treatment for individuals with palliative care needs. Referrals to NHS CIC seeking homeopathy treatment for other conditions are assessed on a case by case basis. If individuals have been seen within NHS Lothian's secondary care services in the previous two years, support for referral is sought from the clinical team (s) involved in care of each individual and requires consultant confirmation the referral should be considered as an exceptional case. If individuals have not been seen within secondary care services, support for referral is sought from NHS Lothian's Medical Director for Primary Care.

NHS Lothian is aware NHS CIC also provides services for chronic / long term conditions such as chronic pain, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME – CFS) and neurological conditions. NHS Lothian provides a number of local NHS services to support assessment, treatment and rehabilitation for those with neurological conditions, chronic pain and ME-CFS therefore individuals with these conditions are referred for assessment and treatment to our local services. NHS Lothian also supports a number of service level agreements with the voluntary sector to provide support to individuals with long term conditions in particular for neurological conditions.

NHS Lothian is aware of the nationally designated residential specialist pain management service provided at NHS CIC. Referrals to this national service can be made directly by a secondary care consultant in pain medicine therefore NHS Lothian's Safehaven does not screen referrals to NHS CIC for this service.

In summary, NHS Lothian continues to support access to NHS CIC if deemed to be clinically appropriate, however it should be recognised NHS Lothian provides local services for a number of long term conditions and access to local NHS and voluntary sector services should continue to be supported.

Yours sincerely

TIM DAVISON
Chief Executive