

Dear Simon

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal for the formal ICB merger. From Healthwatch Worcestershire's perspective we agree that the approach you propose as set out in the attached document is a pragmatic solution in the current circumstance and therefore support it, albeit with the following caveats:

- HWW has attended strategic and operational meetings of both commissioners and providers of services within Worcestershire's ICS since 2013. Based on that attendance it is our experience that the ICB, and the CCG before that, exercised significant leadership over both strategic and operational issues within Worcestershire's health economy, particularly in the areas of Urgent and Emergency Care, Stroke, Cancer, Elective, Diagnostics, end of Life and Mental Health services. It is our assessment that your leadership has had considerable influence on safety and quality of services for patients and the public and we are concerned that the change in role of the ICB as it moves to its new role will leave a vacuum which will not be filled to the detriment of our health service.
- We are concerned that the merger proposal could lead to a shift of focus from systems that are currently in development within the existing ICB footprint eg Stroke and End of Life Care, and would look for confirmation that existing initiatives will be continued.
- The merger proposal brings together very diverse communities who live within very diverse geographies which will require a very reduced workforce to develop a knowledge and range of skill sets to work effectively without exacerbating health inequalities

Kind regards

Simon

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Chair

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