

23 June 2023

# STATEMENT FROM DAISY HILL HOSPITAL FUTURE GROUP

The Daisy Hill Hospital Future Group and SOS Committee attended yesterday's Trust Board meeting to hear the Trust's plans for stabilising services at Daisy Hill. Both groups have been lobbying at government level for support for the hospital to minimise the impact of medical workforce challenges and stabilise the delivery of services. Following positive meetings with the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health, the Trust were charged with developing an interim stabilisation plan that would directly address ongoing challenges at Daisy Hill.

At yesterday's meeting, the Trust shared their plan with the wider Trust board, trade unions and community representatives. The plan will seek to stabilise services over the next six months by engaging four consultants from Craigavon Hospital to support acute medical services at Daisy Hill. Guarantees were also given that ED was secure and that there would be no job losses. Medical support for gastro intestinal patients would also be available from other Trusts and 83 in-patient medical beds would be available. Stroke patients requiring ambulance turnout would be transported to either Craigavon or the Royal for treatment, however, stroke patients who made their own way to Daisy Hill would be stabilised and treated there including receiving thrombolysis. Stroke rehab would be re-instated at Daisy Hill.

Other key elements of the plan includes the provision of an MRI scanner at Daisy Hill which will deliver 6,000 scans over the next nine months. A full-time permanent imaging and diagnostic suite will also be developed on site as part of the capital plan for the overall development of the hospital.

Private ambulance services will be increased to accommodate hospital transfers thus freeing up emergency ambulances to respond to crisis calls.

It was made clear that the elective surgical overnight stay facility was already operational and that by October there would be a significant increase in the numbers of surgeries taking place as a result of additional theatre staff being available.

While we applaud the significant effort that has been invested in developing this plan, and we acknowledge that this is a more positive outlook than was presented to us three weeks ago, there clearly remains a huge amount of work still to do to ensure that the hospital has the necessary resources to continue to provide acute medical services through the coming winter months and beyond. The significant winter pressures experienced last year at Daisy Hill strongly suggest that the proposed bed reduction will significantly impact the hospital's ability to cope with similar pressures this year. There must be a concerted regional effort to effectively plan for and manage this pending crisis, otherwise Daisy Hill and the hospital estate across the region will implode.

Both the Future Group and the SOS Committee are committed to doing everything we can to maintain and develop services at Daisy Hill and to ensure that the Department and the Trust are doing everything possible to secure the hospital and reassure both staff and patients. Every effort must be made to retain current staff on site and to encourage new staff to come and work at Daisy Hill.

The people of Newry, South Down and South Armagh deserve nothing less than equitable access to acute hospital services on a par with citizens living within the shadow of the greater Belfast Hospital estate, and we will settle for nothing less. We will work with both the Department and the Trust to collectively achieve that outcome, and to ensure that Daisy Hill has a stable and secure future and can continue to provide safe and excellent care.

**ENQUIRIES TO:**

Conor Patterson  
(Chair)

[cpatterson@nmea.net](mailto:cpatterson@nmea.net)  
077 6817 8907