**Media Release**

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**‘No decisions made on Cheltenham A&E’ say health leaders**

Health leaders in the county have responded to claims of imminent ‘closure’ of Cheltenham’s A&E by describing them as ‘inaccurate, misleading and therefore potentially confusing for members of the public and hospital staff.’

They say that the *Fit for the Future* engagement which lasts through the summer and autumn is an opportunity for everyone to share ideas and develop potential solutions together.

In their *Fit for the Future* booklet, the NHS explain that they are aiming high and believe they have the potential to provide the very best healthcare in the country, which would not only match the best centres nationally, but enable more patients to receive care in Gloucestershire.

Professor Mark Pietroni, Director of Safety and Medical Director at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust said:

“We want to make it very clear that no plans have been drawn up to close A&E in Cheltenham and the current engagement is an opportunity for people to have their say on how best to deliver outstanding specialist hospital care in the future, including the nature of local A&E services.

One idea for discussion is to create a Centre of Excellence for Emergency Care in Gloucestershire treating critical life and limb threatening conditions. It would be one way of ensuring scarce specialist staff, expertise and facilities were always on hand to get the right treatment started whatever time of day or night and support survival and recovery.

We say very clearly in the *Fit for the Future* booklet that we see both Cheltenham General and Gloucestershire Royal hospitals continuing to provide a range of same day, walk in, urgent care services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for local patients. Whatever form that ultimately takes, the majority of patients who need urgent hospital care, would continue to access services as they do now.”

The public and staff would be consulted on any significant changes proposed that followed on from the engagement period.

Tewkesbury GP and member of NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body, Dr Jeremy Welch said:

“Through *Fit for the Future* we would like to see open, two way conversations taking place and hear everyone’s ideas about what services should look like.

There will be a range of views on how the NHS can deliver leading edge care in the future and it’s important that everyone’s views are heard – whether that’s the medical profession, community partners, staff, carers or interested members of the public.

There are a number of ways people can get involved and there are some innovative features of the engagement process such as a public engagement hearing, a Citizens’ Jury and a solutions appraisal exercise in public.”

Through sharing information and exchanging views, the engagement will provide a wealth of feedback to inform future planning. The public and staff will be consulted on any significant changes proposed that follow on from this engagement programme.

People can find out how to get involved at [www.onegloucestershire.net](http://www.onegloucestershire.net)