

Local Healthcare Bill Consultation

Response by Kemnay Community Council

The replies below are numbered to correspond with the questions in the consultation document. In some cases the Community Council did not have strong opinions, or were not sufficiently aware of the implications of the question, and in these cases the questions have been skipped.

1. It is not entirely clear to us exactly how the current system can be effective when it would appear that everyone involved in monitoring and delivery is appointed. While we are not in any way implying that the individuals concerned are not dedicated and thorough, it is a system that would appear to be open to political abuse.
- 2.
3. We would support the appointment or election of more lay members. It would probably best if these members were not appointed to represent a particular body or group.
4. Not necessarily. We feel that one councillor is adequate, and we need scope for other people to get involved. We have reservations about local authorities becoming more deeply involved.
5. As we are unclear as to the composition of the Scottish Health Council we are unable to comment.
6. Firstly, they should make themselves more prominent, perhaps by involving the press and local broadcasting more. They could involve Community Councils, which are the proper conduit for liaison with the general public. As it is, Kemnay Community Council was not aware of the structure, let alone being invited to comment or pass on news.
7. See Q6 above.
8. We would like to see a Community Council representative on boards, probably best from the Area Forums, to allow grass roots opinion to be heard.
9. We think that in a democracy the only qualification should be for a candidate to appear on the electoral roll (but see also response to Q11 and Q12).
10. If by this question you are asking if we favour some form of positive discrimination, the answer is an emphatic No. We would like to see a fully representative board, but this should be achieved by encouragement, not by gerrymandering.
11. Yes. Electors will need to know what skills candidates can bring, but we feel that any political slant should result in a candidate being ineligible.
12. Yes. This is far too important a matter to be left to politicians with a hidden, or maybe not hidden, agenda.

13. The only reason we can think which would merit disqualification of a candidate would be if that person had been convicted of fraudulent activity. In general, other convictions probably would probably not be an obstacle.
14. As for Local Authority Elections.
15. We would have thought a similar periodicity to those for Local Authority Elections would be appropriate, but whether they should be held on the same day is a matter for debate as that could cause even more confusion in the minds of electors.
16. No. We feel that professionals should form the majority, although not to the extent that they would be disproportionate in total.
17. The new elected members would, in effect, be replacing the current lay members so these should be dropped. We feel that the remaining balance should remain more or less as it is at present.
18. There will be no need for local authority Councillors as the elected members will have been selected by the same process. Should someone wish to stand for both positions that would be their choice.
19. There will have to be some form of electoral ward system, covering the areas served by individual trusts. The existing wards would result in too many Board Members, so these would have to be combined in some way. As an example in Aberdeenshire this could, perhaps, be achieved by using the six areas as a basis.
20. This is always a risk in any democracy, and is possibly a risk even with the present system.
21. We certainly wish to see any canvassing on political grounds be banned, however if a group has been canvassing on a particular medical issue, and wins sufficient support to secure election, it would be the sign of a totalitarian state if, because officialdom did not approve, their election was declared invalid.
22. For the sake of simplicity, we favour "First past the post".
23. The same rules that apply to Local Authority Elections should be used.
24. In general, No, but they should be paid expenses and compensation for loss of earnings.
25. Yes, we support having pilot schemes.
26. Two should be run, one in an urban area, one in a more rural area (accepting that no area would be truly rural).
- 27.
28. They should run for one term, ie, probably four years.

29. There should be a “Before and after” questionnaire to establish if the system is working better. If it is, adopt it, if the results are the same or worse, why change?
30. Both. National guidelines and priorities should be set, but if local boards have no authority to take account of local conditions there would be no point in having them. The regulation should therefore be gentle and not overly restrictive.
31. Our views are covered by the response in Q31. Over regulation negates the point of having boards.
32. Members should only be removed if they breach a published and adopted code of conduct. Removal should not just be at the whim of a minister who may have a political agenda (not that he/she would ever admit to that).
33. No. We would not wish to see the budget cut to cover this; although we would like to see the money being spent more wisely. We have no idea what the cost of running elections would be, but imagine it would be similar to those of other elections, unless the NHS ones could be “piggy backed” on to another one. If we have to quote a figure, how about £38.64?