

Report on Edington Hospital Community Survey



Compiled by Craig Hoy MSP

INTRODUCTION: Craig Hoy MSP



As an East Lothian-based MSP, I believe that local health services are a vital part of our community.

That is why I decided to publish this report into the response of residents on the closure of inpatient services at Edington Cottage Hospital. This follows the decision of NHS Lothian to temporarily close in-patient services at the Edington Hospital in North Berwick.

Since officially opening in 1913, Edington Hospital has served the people of North Berwick and East Lothian. The hospital, constructed thanks to a bequest by Miss Elizabeth Edington of North Berwick, is operated by NHS Lothian and is a greatly respected local facility.

Prior to Covid and its closure, the hospital had nine beds and provided medical care for a range of chronic conditions, mobility problems, respite and end of life care. The hospital also operated a highly regarded minor injuries department and was staffed by ten nursing staff, eight clinical support staff and four domestic staff.

On 1 September 2021, NHS Lothian announced the closure of the Edington Hospital due to bed and staffing constraints at other facilities. The plan saw the six inpatient beds, and the staff who support them, temporarily relocated from the Edington Cottage Hospital to the East Lothian Community Hospital in Haddington.

The hospital's Minor Injuries Unit was effectively downgraded, replaced by a Community Treatment and Care (CTAC) unit. NHS Lothian announced that there would be a quarterly review to determine whether services would return to the Edington Hospital.

The first review takes place on December 9, but NHS Lothian has already signaled that it is presently unlikely that the facility will be re-opened at this stage, as wider winter and Covid pressures persist.

I am concerned that these changes were made without any form of community consultation. In recognition of, and in response to, this I have been working closely with local residents and campaign groups.

The views of the public are incredibly important when making decisions about public services and designing services. When decisions are made centrally, the services they create will not be able to meet the demand and needs of local communities.

That is why I took the decision to undertake a community survey in North Berwick, and the surrounding area, to gauge the views of local people on the reduction of services at the Edington Hospital.

The survey was posted to every household in the North Berwick Coastal ward, and an online version was available via social media for those outwith the local area.

In total we secured the views of 1,929 people from North Berwick Coastal ward and across East Lothian.

This report includes key data from the survey and notes some of the key responses from local residents who have been treated, or had loved ones treated, at the Edington.

I thank all those who took the time to respond to this community survey which ensured that their voices were heard. It is worth noting that 97% of those who responded are opposed the continued closure of services at the Edington Hospital.

Given the scale of the response, it is imperative that the clear community views contained within this report are heard by NHS Lothian as they make their decision on whether to reopen the Edington on December 9 - and in any future reviews of local services.

Kind regards,



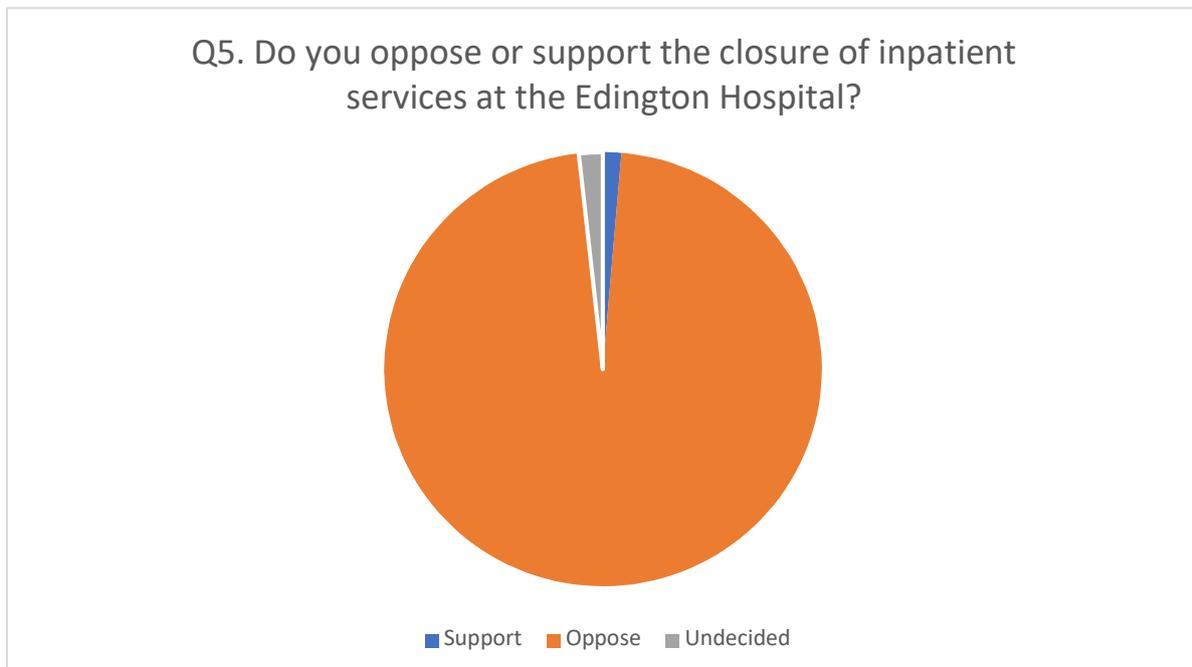
Craig Hoy MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament
the South Scotland Region
craig.hoy.msp@parliament.scot

OPPOSITION TO CLOSURE

The clear conclusion of this survey is that local residents are implacably opposed to the closure of the inpatient services at the hospital.

When asked if they oppose or support the closure of inpatient services at the Edington Hospital, 97% said they were against the move.

This highlights the very clear need for the hospital to be reopened as soon as possible. It also highlights the clear need for NHS Lothian managers to fully engage: both on the temporary closure and on any future plans to reprovise healthcare facilities in North Berwick and the wider East Lothian area.



Results:

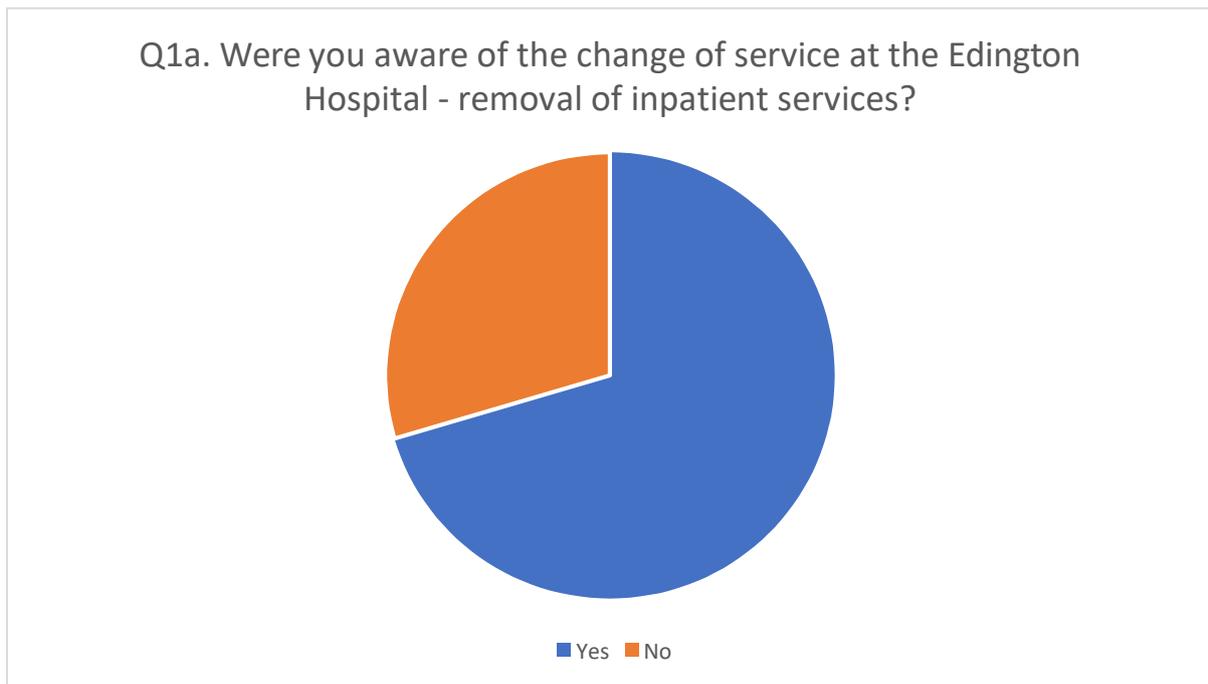
Support – 26	1.4%
Oppose – 1865	96.9%
Undecided – 34	1.8%

AWARENESS LEVELS

To open the survey, we asked local residents if they were aware of the change of service at the Edington Hospital, namely the removal of inpatient services.

Nearly seven in 10 residents said they were aware of the closure, indicating the significant level of community engagement in the hospital.

This also highlights how effective local organisations and community groups, such as the Friends of the Edington Hospital and the North Berwick Community Council, have been in drawing attention to the impact of the closure.



Results:

Yes – 1367 70.4%

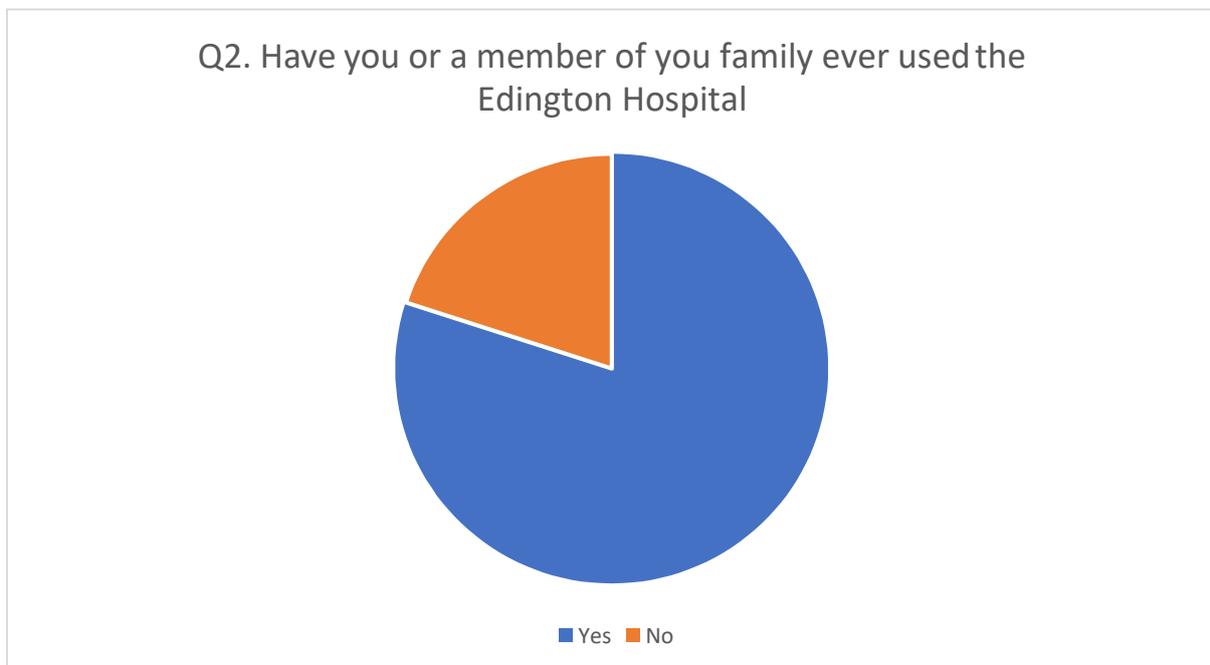
No – 574 29.6%

HIGH LEVELS OF LOCAL USE

We asked local residents whether they or a member of their family had ever used the Edington Hospital.

A very significant number, 80%, said they or a family member had used the facility, with only 20% having no family experience of having used any facility at the Edington hospital.

This underlines the importance of the hospital. Given the aging population and local demographics, poor public transport connection to Haddington and the climate change challenge, it is important that local healthcare resources are maintained.



Results:

Yes – 1547 80.0%

No – 387 20.0%

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

It is clear that the value of the Edington Hospital cannot just be measured by NHS managers or government ministers on spreadsheets. Many residents have a personal story or experience of using the Edington.

It is clear that the hospital provides much needed, and high-quality levels of care. It is therefore vital that these facilities are restored.

Here are just a selection from hundreds of positive comments:

“My Mother spent her final days there. She was so well looked after and as a former nurse, was happy to be there unlike her stays at RIE and WGHE.” – **Jane, North Berwick resident**

“I have used the Edington since when my son was small. The Edington looks after the community from scrapes and scratches through to respite & end of life care. It is our beating heart.” – **Lynda, North Berwick Resident**

“Both my in-laws have been admitted to the Edington and both been cared for with first class nurses and doctors. North Berwick needs the Edington”. – **George, North Berwick Resident**

“Over the years my children (now adults) and myself have had the wonderful medical support from Edington staff. My disabled son has been able to get support when injured. Our community is so much bigger, so the support is even more necessary.” – **Evelyn, North Berwick resident**

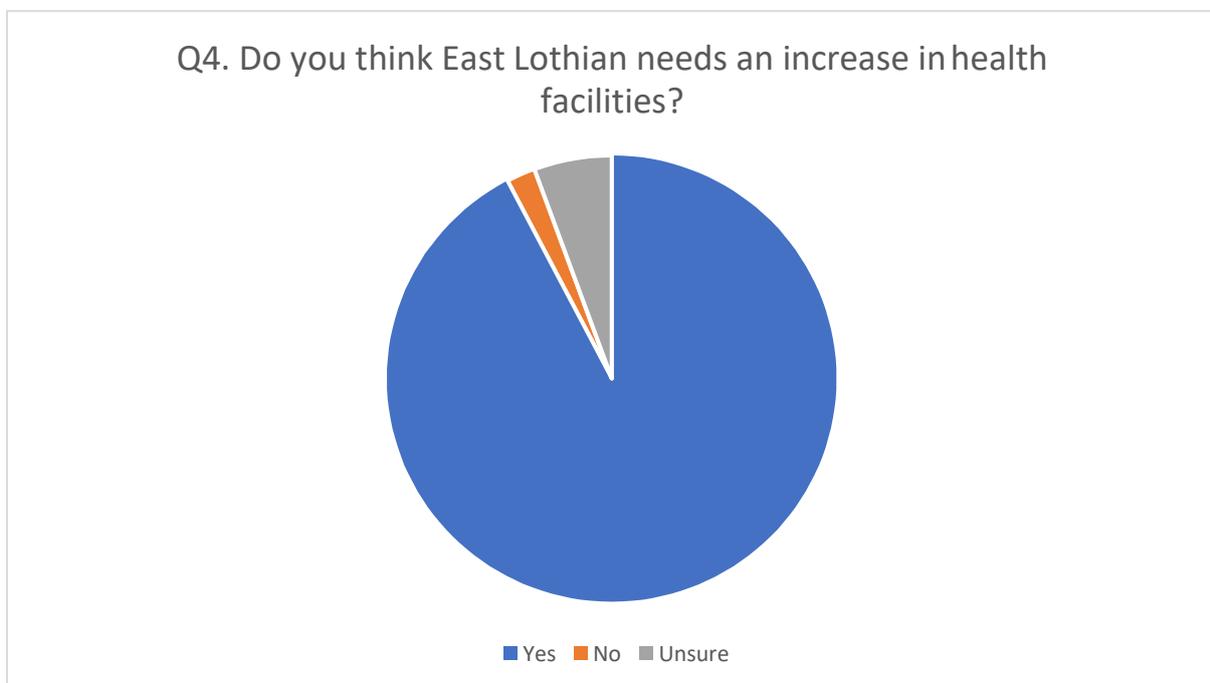
“Our 5-year-old son broke his elbow, being able to see a nurse quickly really helped ensure he got the right treatment. Access to healthcare/GPs is nearly impossible these days. This would make things much worse” – **Andrew, North Berwick resident**

FUTURE PROVISION

East Lothian is the second fastest growing area in Scotland in population growth terms. New housing across the county has led to significant challenges in terms of infrastructure needs and the provision of core services, such as GP services.

The survey asked residents whether they think East Lothian needs an increase in health facilities. Some 92% of residents said they would like to see an increase in such facilities, with only 2% suggesting present levels of healthcare were sufficient.

This is a critical issue for the county and something that as a local MSP I will pursue on behalf of residents.



Results:

Yes – 1781	92.3%
No – 40	2.1%
Unsure – 108	5.6%

REFLECTIONS ON THE EDINGTON

To conclude the survey, we asked local residents to give me their wider thoughts on the Edington Hospital. These comments reinforced just how important the hospital is to the community, and stress why it is so important that we safeguard and enhance services now and in the future.

Residents Views:

“It is a wonderful service on our doorstep that’s serving thousands who would need to flood Roodlands or A&E instead if it did not exist. It’s at the heart of our community, good for the heart and soul. It should be treasured” – **Shonagh, North Berwick resident**

“A very valuable and useful service. Very reassuring to older residents in the local area.” – **Susan, North Berwick resident**

“I have just had cancer and live alone, one of my biggest worries was will I die alone at home & my biggest comfort was that the Edington was there for people in need” – **Fiona, North Berwick resident**

“I am a GP in Gullane with 25+ years of admitting and looking after patients in the Edington – I was not informed directly of the decision – I contacted the Director and received a second-hand apology.” – **Dr Andrew Smith, Gullane GP**

“North Berwick is growing so much with lots of new housing. The health of all of those plus existing people must be taken care of. Not everyone has a car or access to family transport and must get to Edinburgh or Haddington for treatment. A growing elderly population needs care given at the Edington especially end of life. Please don’t forget them. **Virginia, North Berwick resident**

“The closure of the Edington Hospital would be absolutely wrong it is an amazing facility appreciated and used by the community” – **North Berwick resident**

“I feel the Edington Hospital provides a very valuable service to the local community. The inpatient service should not have been closed without community consultation even in these challenging times. The Edington is a fine example of community-based healthcare which should be duplicated in other areas.” – **Pamela, North Berwick resident**

CONCLUSION

The Edington is a well-used and well-loved service in the community. It provides a vital service to the local community in North Berwick and further afield. This is clearly reflected in the survey responses.

In particular, the Minor Injuries Unit at the Edington was highlighted by many as a key local resource, and one which improved and saved lives. The expectation that those injured should be able to make their own way to Edinburgh to receive treatment, an hour by car for those that are able to, is clearly unreasonable. This is especially so given the increase in the local population and the climate change challenge.

In addition, it is clear from many survey responses that the opportunity for those to recuperate in their home community is a source of great comfort. This no doubt leads to better health outcomes and faster recuperation for those patients.

The palliative care also provided by the Edington for those at the end of life was also greatly appreciated by local people. To be close to, and have the ability to quickly see, a loved one who is nearing the end of their life is of benefit and comfort to local people. This option would simply not be available to many, particularly those without cars, if this care was based outside of the community.

The responses also reflected the very high regard that staff in the Edington are held in by those in local communities. Many commented that staff often went above and beyond the call of duty in the service of patients and families.

We can but hope that NHS Lothian will give these views their full attention and that the Edington Hospital will be reopened soon.

As a local MSP I will continue to engage with local residents, NHS managers and the Government on this important issue.

I would very much welcome your thoughts and feedback as it is vital that we continue to protect, enhance and expand local healthcare provision in North Berwick and across East Lothian.

