

Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign



Press Release - November 3 2016

Call to Publish “Sustainability & Transformation Plans” for our Area

Today the Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign has written to South Tyneside and Sunderland leaders of the Hospital Trusts, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Health and Well-Being Boards and Council leaders to call on them to release the Sustainability & Transformation Plans (STPs) that have so far been withheld from the public and that will impact on the provision of acute services, Accident & Emergency services across South Tyneside and Sunderland as well as the whole NHS in our region. NHS England is telling CCGs not to publish the STPs till NHS England has commented on them, and yet other authorities have published them in order to allow public and patient involvement.

Gemma Taylor Co-ordinator for SSTHC said; “We know the plans exist so we feel it is right to demand that they be released immediately. We believe no government has a mandate to carry out top down cut backs and closures to the NHS acute and emergency services. These STP cuts have already been officially reported to amount to almost a third of the NHS budget some £22-30 billion. We need to see the full Northumbria, Tyne & Wear report as submitted as well as the local response plans that South Tyneside Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland have submitted.”

All the 44 STPs were submitted by 21 October and some have been made publicly available already. What we already know about the STP is that Northumbria, Tyne & Wear has been told to cut £960 million from the NHS budget by 2020/21. The Durham, Darlington, Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire & Whitby Sustainability Transformation Plan which has already been published by Hartlepool Council, shows a massive programme of cuts to Hospital acute services and reduces 24 hour A&Es in the area from 6 to 1 in a massive cut of £500 million by 2021.

The government tries to justify this by claiming that we cannot afford to sustain the financing of the NHS at present levels. This is completely false and against the right of all to health care. UK spending on healthcare (9.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015)ⁱ is significantly below the average of major European economies. If the UK were to increase its spend to the average of these countries which is 10.7% of GDP, this would equate to an extra £15bn of funding.

Roger Nettleship Chair of SSTHC said; “What we know about these STPs, even though the powers that be have so far refused to release them is that it shows that the government treats the NHS services and health workers as if they are a 'cost and a burden to the economy'. Health workers and health services keep people healthy and therefore directly contribute and add value to the whole economy. Yet the government does not uphold its responsibility and claim this value from the massive profits of the big corporations. They would also rather leave both our state run hospitals in South Tyneside and Sunderland in deficit through unattainable efficiency savings and force them to cut services when it is the government's responsibility to secure those budgets in full and to run the economy to meet the needs of all those that live and work in it.”

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ⁱ <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=SHA>