

Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign



C/O Unison Office
South Tyneside District Hospital
South Shields
Tyne & Wear
NE340PL

Press Statement

Response of Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign to proposed merger of South Tyneside Foundation Trust with City Hospitals Sunderland

At its bi-weekly meeting on Monday January 22nd 2018 the Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign discussed the proposed merger between South Tyneside Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland. South Tyneside Foundation Trust is responsible for providing District hospital to the people of South Tyneside and community hospital services to the people of South Tyneside and Sunderland. In April 2016 the two Trusts formed an alliance and in August 2016 both Trusts came under the one Executive team based in Sunderland with separate Non-Executive Directors and separate governors. If the merger goes ahead the Sunderland based Executive team will come one Executive and Non-Executive team and one board of governors.

The meeting noted that already the Alliance has a track record of seeking to downgrade acute services accessed by thousands of people in South Tyneside claiming that “all duplicated services are unsafe and unsustainable” and claiming this as a “path to excellence” when the services South Tyneside Hospital provides have exceeded the expectations in relation to hospitals in the north east and England against a background of a population with some of the poorest health outcomes in England. This Alliance also has a track record of seeking to transfer its own staff in Sunderland and staff at South Tyneside hospital to an arms length Sunderland company, *Choice*.

The overwhelming feeling at the meeting as to why this merger is being proposed was that it is not to safeguard the future of the acute and community services in both Sunderland and South Tyneside Hospital but to accelerate the downgrading of services at South Tyneside and remove the blocks to that direction. This is the track record of the alliance so far, so how will the people of South Tyneside have any confidence in this Executive team. In particular it looks like the main aim of the merger as announced by Ken Bremner the CEO is to “make it easy as possible for our teams to work effectively together without unnecessary organisational boundaries”. This is alarming because having separate governors, having separately employed clinicians and nurses and a separate union staff side give the people of South Tyneside some organisational coherence and memory – in our local health services. We have staff and local managers and union organisers who have shown such courage already in standing up for the needs of the patients and the right to access these vital health care services in South Tyneside.

The meeting agreed that we would express our concern at any proposed merger of the two Trusts.

Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign

website: <http://www.savesouthtynesidehospital.org/>

facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SaveSouthTynesideHospital/>

Twitter: [@SaveSTyneHospital](https://twitter.com/SaveSTyneHospital)

Chair Roger Nettleship E-mail: roger.nettleship@blueyonder.co.uk Mobile: 07963506451