

Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign

C/O Unison Office, South Tyneside District Hospital.

Tuesday 25 September

Press Release:

Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign Response to the Announced Merger Between South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

The Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign has today responded to the “engagement” process of City Hospitals Sunderland and South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust to merge the two Trusts. We attach the response in full but have highlighted our main concerns.

- The Trusts are avoiding their responsibility to properly consult (staff, citizens / patients, governors, local authority). Underpinning this is their assertion that the merger will have no impact upon clinical services.
- The timing of the merger is not a coincidence. It will facilitate the 'Path to Excellence', the downgrading and closure of services at South Tyneside Hospital, by removing structures in South Tyneside such as governors and union representation that serve to protect staff and services, and that give the people of South Tyneside a louder voice. The Trusts refer to this as "removing unnecessary organisational boundaries".
- This is also a precursor for staff transfers into the Sunderland-based arms-length private company 'Choices'. Unison has properly surveyed its members at South Tyneside District Hospital and the vast majority reject the merger and all have major concerns.
- This is not a merger but a takeover. It is the government policy implemented by NHS England and NHS Health Improvement of having imposed the incoherence of market takeovers on the NHS and replaced public authorities. This is now going full circle from public health authorities to the take over of “Sustainability and Transformation Plans” and American style “Accountable Care Organisations” to manage this incoherent health market. This whole direction for the NHS means that health staff and the communities are further locked out of any say, whilst the commercial interests rather than clinical needs hold sway by this system which includes these increasing “mergers” in the NHS.
- The misleading concept behind this takeover is that of the Trusts being 'stronger together'. A new direction would not be based on mergers that claim “stronger together”, but a direction where the vital health services we need are stronger and accessible to all. It would not be based on this merger to remove what safeguards we have, which give some input into the decisions on our health services, but a new direction where the vital health services we need are stronger because we as people are that new authority together fighting for those services based on what health services in a modern society should be like now. A Health service where we have the access in South Tyneside, like every other borough and city, to these vital acute & emergency, community and mental health services at our hospitals now and in the future.

Contact:

Roger Nettleship
Chair SSTHC
roger.nettleship@blueyonder.co.uk
Mobile: 07963506451