

PRESS RELEASE

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Campaigners Call For Rethink Of South Tyneside Hospital Service Closures Ahead Of Crucial Hearing

Court Of Appeal Set To Examine 'Extremely Worrying' Proposals

Campaigners battling to prevent the closure of key services at South Tyneside Hospital have reiterated their hopes that authorities will rethink the plans, ahead of a Court of Appeal hearing.

The Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign Group was established after NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS South Tyneside CCG took the decision to transfer maternity, women's healthcare, paediatric and stroke services away from the hospital.

The group has a range of concerns regarding the decision, including that it believes the consultation on the issue in 2017 was legally flawed and that the subsequent decision taken by the CCGs was unlawful.

The campaigners instructed Irwin Mitchell's specialist Public Law and Human Rights team to help them challenge the decision. While an initial judicial review was not successful the Court of Appeal granted permission for that decision to be reviewed. A Court of Appeal hearing is due to place at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on November 19.

Helen Smith, the specialist public law expert at Irwin Mitchell's Newcastle office who is acting for the Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign Group, said: "Our clients have been involved in a long battle regarding these proposals and we are determined to support them every step of the way.

"It is very welcome that the Court of Appeal is hearing the case and it remains vital that all aspects of the proposals are properly examined. A huge number of people within the local area are concerned about what the plans may mean for them, so it is clear that any final decision must be made lawfully and in accordance with the proper process."

Irwin Mitchell is set to argue in the Court of Appeal that the decision-making process in relation to the services at South Tyneside Hospital was essentially pre-determined. Campaigners also believe

there was not enough information on the various options or the implications of the decision.

Roger Nettleship, a spokesperson for the Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign Group, said:
“The Court of Appeal hearing is another opportunity for us to raise our concerns and it will hopefully lead to a rethink of these extremely worrying plans.

“It has been a real battle to get our voices heard on this matter and we know so many people in the community are devastated about the impact that the closures to overnight children’s A&E, maternity and the Special Care Baby Unit are having. To see services for women and children particularly affected is very worrying. We will continue to fight with everything we have.

“Something has to change with these proposals and we would urge the authorities to once again rethink their plans.”

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Notes to Editors

For further information, pictures and interview requests please contact the Irwin Mitchell press office on 0114 274 4666.

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