

TRUSY 'DEEPLY CONCERNED' OVER IMPACT ADDITIONAL DELAYS TO MOVE COULD HAVE

Go-ahead for legal hearing over hospital services plan

By **LISA NIGHTINGALE**

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Lawyers acting for a campaign group fighting decisions by hospital bosses to relocate vital services from South Tyneside to Sunderland have been given the green light to pursue a legal challenge through the courts.

Law firm **Irwin Mitchell** had previously written to NHS Sunderland and NHS South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Groups urging them to overturn the decision to move maternity, womens healthcare, paediatric and stroke services from South Tyneside, or potentially face a judicial review in the High Court.

After the two CCGs stood by their decision, the High Court has confirmed to the law firm – acting on behalf of the Save South Tyneside Hospital Group – that it can proceed with its legal action, with His Honour Judge Saffman saying he believed the grounds put forward were “sufficiently arguable such as to justify the granting of permission.”

The decision has left the



Sunderland Royal Hospital and, inset, South Tyneside District Hospital.

CCG's "deeply concerned about the additional delay that this legal process will bring" and say the changes have been taken to "protect services that are exceptionally vulnerable because of a severe shortage of skilled medical and nursing staff."

Matt Brown, Director of Operations at South Tyneside

side Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said: "These critical changes have been about taking steps to protect services that are exceptionally vulnerable because of a severe shortage of skilled medical and nursing staff."

He added: "The Trust has provided repeated reassurance that South Tyneside

Hospital has a strong and vibrant future, serving local residents."

Yogi Amin, a partner and head of public law and human rights at **Irwin Mitchell**, said: "Following our instruction, we argued that there were grounds for a judicial review of the decision taken by NHS managers at South

Tyneside CCG and NHS Sunderland CCG on February 21."

"Unfortunately South Tyne"

No date has yet been set for the hearing.

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