

# Save South Tyneside Hospital



## Campaign

## Newsletter



No. 1 April 18, 2017 Newsletter of the Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign

## Now is the Time to Defend Our Hospitals and Our NHS

### First phase of the Consultation likely to start in late May

The South Tyneside and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have told us they are preparing to start consultation in late May on the first phase of the consultation on the Clinical Reviews at South Tyneside Hospital.

These reviews are part of the STP plans of the government to impose by 2021 £900 million (£641 million in health) in annual cuts to the social care and health care budgets of our hospitals and NHS in Northumbria, Tyne & Wear and North Durham.

Although the STPs have not been, either signed off or consulted on, the South Tyneside CCG is determined to go ahead with consultations to reshape our clinical acute services by making them no longer available at South Tyneside Hospital (STH) claiming it is a “path to excellence”. At the recent governors meeting health leaders admitted that the proposed changes are more driven by the ongoing budget cuts of both our hospitals in South Tyneside and Sunderland. This deliberate deficit financing through another “cost improvement” in the year 2017-18 will be



*SSTHC joined the massive demonstration and rally on March 4 in London - Photo outside the Houses of Parliament*

another unachievable cut of some £11 million at STH and £13 million at CHS. This is the whip that the government is using to close down our acute services and force people to travel to Sunderland and elsewhere for even more overstretched services. This flies in the

face of the excellent performance of our STH A&E which was at the top in the country in meeting the 4 hour waits in March.

We encourage everyone to attend our public meetings which will take place once the consultation starts.

### SSTHC Public Meetings

**Public meetings will take place in South Shields and Sunderland in late May or June, depending on when the consultation starts - check our website for details.**

**Access to health care is a right of all in a modern society, and we demand that it must be guaranteed**

# Briefing On Northumbria, Tyne & Wear and north Durham Sustainability and Transformation Plan

December 5 2016

The *Northumbria, Tyne & Wear and north Durham Sustainability and Transformation Plan (NTWND STP)* was finally released on November 9 2016 as a “draft”, with “local engagement” of 8 weeks from November 23, before the final plan was going to be released for “consultation” with the public sometime early in the new year of January 2016.

At that time, SSTHC set up a working group and following detailed discussions in the group issued a briefing and response to the plan dated December 5 2016 which was submitted to the South Tyneside CCG local engagement process.

However, to date no consultation has taken place and in answer to our questions the plan now rests with NHS England and the government and has not been authorised, consulted on or signed off by any authority so far. But part of the STP plan that has been signed off by the alliance of both hospital Trusts and both Sunderland and South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Groups is the “path to excellence” plan and its “clinical reviews” the first phase of which is to be consulted soon. In other words as we have pointed out they are implementing part of a plan that has not yet been agreed.

Already, at the Community Area forums last year and in other settings people were told about the “rebalancing” of “duplicated” acute services to Sunderland because they are no longer “safe or sustainable”. This was asserted without any detailed consultation on the proposals, or independent assessment of the risks to sustainability and safety to patients if these services are moved from our hospitals. In our briefing on the STP we sought to redress this balance by raising the questions and answers that show that the STP itself, or the “path to excellence” included in it will not “sustain” our NHS and will not “transform” it into a safe health system for patients. We reprint in the Newsletter the summary of the briefing. The full document can be accessed on our website as follows.

[http://www.savesouthtynesidehospital.org/news/response\\_to\\_stp/](http://www.savesouthtynesidehospital.org/news/response_to_stp/)

## Summary

- The *NTWND STP* is not a sustainable financial plan. It is the largest cut to the NHS budget ever seen in its history, and is a deliberate attempt to make the NHS unsustainable so that it can be privatised and people charged for care.
- The *NTWND STP* will not transform our NHS into a safe health system for patients. It is full of policy objectives and models of care that have not been tested first and are not funded. It cuts vital acute services from A&E to full consultant led; ITU, emergency surgery and maternity services in our hospitals. The STP is a plan that will use NHS funding to prop-up the massive cuts to council social funding by massive cuts to health services. This will widen the crisis gap in both health and social care, and is a path to disaster.
- The *NTWND STP* and its projected massive cut to funding will not close but is more likely to widen the “three gaps” that the STP talks about; health and well-being, care and quality and financial sustainability. No specifics are given on how ill health prevention services that will take decades to have any effect are to be brought about. These preventative services have been slashed over recent years and new community care models have so far not reduced (in any significant way) acute admissions. They are simply advanced as a policy objective to try and justify reduced funding to acute services.
- The *NTWND STP 7 Day* working plan will introduce - without increased NHS funding - 7 day elective care, but at the same time the same plan will close vital 24/7 acute and emergency services. This means

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# The Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign and the Building of an Unstoppable Movement

*The following remarks were given to the North East Political Forum on the Future of Society on January 28 at Redhills, Durham by Gemma Taylor, Co-ordinator of the Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign (SSTHC) who was an invited guest speaker.*

Since the formation of the SSTHC, this work has brought people together from trade unions in the hospital, people in the community, MPs, councillors and political parties into a campaign where the people decide, working out their aims and actions regardless of political views. Those who lead, lead on the basis of working to keep the initiative in the hands of those who are fighting to save the hospital and dealing with uniting people in a very careful way, all from the point of view of releasing the initiative of the people to take action in defence of their hospital acute services and safeguarding the future of the NHS.

The campaign in South Tyneside has reached the stage that 30 or so people meet every two weeks and this where we agree to take important actions to try and engage with members of the public around what is happening in the NHS - we have had stalls and petitions and leaflets. Our petition has now well over 15,000 signatures. This shows the work that has been done in South Tyneside which has moved on to Sunderland to try and engage people around any consultation that might take place so that they might have a say in what happens to the future of their hospital and their NHS. We had a first march and rally last October through the town where hundreds took part showing that it is a very organised force comprising of all the forces I mentioned working together. How to release the initiative of the people and make this movement unstoppable is very much the problem we are all grappling with and how such discussions as today can assist the movement if only in presenting the right questions and posing the problems that need to be solved.

The question of making the movement unstoppable in achieving its aims for a new future for society cannot just be reduced, as it does get reduced, to one of just pressurising those in power to back down on their acute hospital closure programme and so on. Important as those things are, we think that the most important question we should never lose sight



of is being part of the people's movement to change the direction of society and doing everything to try and keep the initiative in the hands of the most progressive forces of the health workers, clinicians and most importantly the working class movement. The issue is building pro-social movements along with others in many parts of the country. It is this tapping into new forces such as clinicians, and expanding the influence of the alternative programme of the working class movement right across society, that will ultimately determine the outcome of the aims of our movement.

Put another way, making the movement unstoppable is about mobilising the people to change the things they can change, seizing what is in their grasp with the approach of the necessity to change society. It is about maximum political mobilisation around that. In other words, how can we develop so that we end up as a powerful movement that deprives the government and the big corporations they represent of the power to deprive the people of what belongs to them by right, the right to health care!

There are some examples of this. For example, is this not what Lewisham did when the whole of the people of Lewisham took Hunt to court and won. That de-

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prived him of that power to take away their A&E and acute services against their will. Of course he and the government then changed the law so they could do this again but their direction became even further exposed in doing so. However, the question it raises shows that this is something very important to sum up, not in terms that we can all take court cases against Hunt and win. We cannot. We can only control what we can control within our circumstances; but the issue is how to uphold the principle of developing a mass movement with this approach. For example, at this time there are government NHS national and local leaders that represent this direction to deprive us of our NHS and our hospital. We are organising our-

selves with this perspective to deprive them of the power to deprive us of our hospital and its services by building a campaign to save South Tyneside Hospital.

We want to concentrate on the approach that is fundamental to changing the direction of society that is reflected in movements of the people to safeguard the NHS. We are building that movement which has this potential today, the potential to shape a new future for society that reflects what is new in our hospitals, our NHS and our workplaces based on our outlook for a modern society where health care is a right and that right is guaranteed. □

## Briefing On Northumbria, Tyne & Wear and north Durham Sustainability and Transformation Plan (Continued from page 2)

that those who really need access to 7 day services 24 hours will be put at risk as this funding is reduced.

- The *NTWND* STP not only fails to include independent impact assessments on health services (or any other service), but none of the documents and appendices that were provided to NHS England have been provided to those who are supposed to assess the impact of the *NTWND* STP.
- The *NTWND* STP makes no attempt to address the crisis in clinical and medical staff that has been deliberately created but aims to just redesign the existing and diminishing workforce.
- Whether people can self care, or not this does not abrogate the responsibility of the state to provide fully funded community, and acute mental and physical health services accessible to all.
- The *NTWND* STP has an ulterior aim of copying highly inefficient but highly profitable US style elective care hospitals and Accountable Care Organisations (ACOs) under the control of merged “public” and private corporations with non profitable and reduced numbers of A&E and trauma hospitals paid for by the public sector.

**Summary Conclusion** - The *draft NTWND* STP is an attempt to pull the wool over our eyes and the eyes of clinicians, non clinicians and others alike. It is an attempt to try and justify the largest withdrawal of funding and resources from the NHS in its entire history. No serious plan for the NHS can be decided upon under the threat of such a massive reduction in the budget of the NHS. No draft can be put forward and taken seriously if it starts from the direction of a major attempt to destroy the NHS, further open up privatisation and further create the conditions to make people pay for health and social services. Regardless of peoples’ views on the direction for our NHS how can we have a proper discussion on these issues in such a climate. Without establishing public bodies and public services accountable to the people and local communities to provide the services that they need, where health care is a right and its funding is guaranteed, nothing can be properly sorted out. No one should sign up to plans which are intent on massively underfunding, wrecking and privatising health care regardless of the consequence to the well-being of the people. We are calling on everyone to join with us to block these plans and organise to get people involved in the fight with us to safeguard the future of our hospitals and our NHS. □

**Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign** - website: <http://www.savesouthtynesidehospital.org>

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