



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
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Councillor Shaun Davies **Leader of the Council**
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Date: 31 March 2017

Dear Secretary of State

I write further to my and Cllr Pate, Leader of Shropshire Council, previous two letters of the 19th October and 16th March concerning the clinical fragility of the A&E departments at both the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and the Princess Royal Hospital (Telford). We asked for any assistance you could offer to secure additional consultant support.

Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital Trust have now taken the decision to start planning to suspend full A&E services overnight at the Princess Royal Hospital Telford later this year. The Trust say this is due to being unable to recruit substantively to the recently advertised A&E consultant posts and from June this year the two departments will only have 4 A&E consultants with an on-call rota of 1 in 3.

The Trust considers that it will take 6 months to implement the proposed overnight closure but that if additional A&E consultants were recruited the Trust could avoid having to take this step. I urge you again to support our local NHS Trust to secure additional A&E consultants to maintain our current level of service.

The Trust has signalled publicly over the last year that this may have to happen if a tipping point was reached. However, a full, open and transparent options appraisal has not been presented at their public board, there has been no equality impact assessment and the development of 'contingency' pathways for those specialities at the PRH which should be co-located with full A&E services such as Women & Children's and Stroke services is yet to be undertaken. This time last year, the Trust told the public at their Board that an impact assessment and continuity pathways were under development but yet a year later they are not able to give the public assurances on these matters.

The Future Fit process to decide the long term options for acute reconfiguration has been on-going since 2013 and was supposed to be ready for consultation in the Autumn of 2015. However, two years later it is 'on hold' awaiting an independent review into the appraisal processes, one that we believe to be flawed. From a Council and residents' perspective, while we recognise that the Trust needs to make business continuity decisions in the interest of clinical safety, this latest decision has been reached in a way that isn't open and honest.

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As a stakeholder, we were not made aware by Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital Trust that this particular issue of a proposed overnight closure was going to be considered at a forthcoming Board meeting (held on 30 March). We also know that we were not the only stakeholder not to have been shown this basic courtesy.

This is another example of the 'disarray' in Shropshire's local NHS which Cllr Pate and I described to you and which you referred to as 'local incompetence' when we met in January. The Council will be holding an Extraordinary Meeting as soon as possible with a motion 'no confidence in Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital trust' as a result.

I urge you again to intervene now before this is too late. If not the PRH will become another downgraded hospital where a temporary service closure on safety grounds becomes permanent.

I ask you to ensure there is sufficient funding and resourcing for the continued running of Accident & Emergency Departments at both the Princess Royal Hospital and the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital until the long-running matter of Future Fit and, with it, the long-term future of this and other hospital services in Shropshire is settled in a legal, fair and transparent manner.

Considering SaTH's recent track record, I also urge you to step in to ensure proper management of these hospitals for the sake of the medical teams who work so hard for all our residents.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Shaun Davies
Leader
Telford & Wrekin Council



Cllr Richard Overton
Deputy Leader
Telford & Wrekin Council

c.c. Local MPs