

SAVE DORSET

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NHS

PRESS RELEASE

11th September 2017



DORSET HEALTH CAMPAIGNS UNITE TO OPPOSE SERVICE CUTS

Health campaigners are protesting against Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (DCCG) proposals to downgrade Poole A&E and Dorset County Maternity, Close Poole Maternity, and close Community Hospitals or Community Hospital beds in six of thirteen Dorset locations.

Decisions will be announced on Wednesday September 20th at a DCCG board meeting. The meeting is by invitation only, and members of the audience will not be allowed to speak. Instead, written questions submitted by campaigners and the public may be addressed in DCCG's presentation, or on their website.

The campaign groups: Keep Our NHS Public (Dorset), Swanage Labour Party Campaign to Save Poole A&E, The Dorset Health Campaign, Save Kingfisher and Special Care Baby Unit and Maternity at Dorchester County Hospital, Save Our Beds at Westminster Memorial Hospital Shaftesbury have come together as Save Dorset NHS to present a united front against the proposals to cut vital Acute and Community Hospital Services across Dorset.

Save Dorset NHS are asking whether the responses to the DCCG Consultation, which include 75,570 petition signatures against the proposals across Dorset, will be taken into account. The Consultation was commissioned by the DCCG at a cost of at least £2.5m, with the main thrust of the Consultation Questionnaire responses echoing the petitioners opposition to the planned cuts.

Debbie Monkhouse adds "Four petitions against the downgrading of Poole A&E, and the closure of Poole Maternity services, gained a total of 36,910 signatures, a massive response in an area the size of Poole. However all 36,910 petitioners have been dismissed as "emotional" by DCCG, which refuses to acknowledge the strength of public opinion. Even Poole Council is opposed to the closures, but has done nothing to protect citizens from the likely effects."

DCCG's Clinical Services Review claims that 25% of Poole A&E's emergency workload can be managed "in the community", thus allowing for a 25% reduction in emergency beds. This assumption has been challenged by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine. Emergency and Acute Medicine Consultants at Poole Hospital have requested that the closure of Poole A&E be delayed until the DCCG can show that a reduction of 25% in admissions has been achieved.

Save Dorset NHS say: "We're asking the DCCG why they are opposed to testing their claim before closing services and reducing the number of beds. When this process began, the DCCG said no bed closures would be necessary. We now hear that 340 beds will be lost across the county, a fifth of the total, and this is despite the bed crisis of last Winter. Yet there has been no proper consultation with local authorities on this reduction in capacity, or any clear plan as to how the unmet need will be managed."

In view of DCCG's serious failure to acknowledge the strength of public opinion, and DCCG's determination to press ahead with unwanted changes and cuts to our NHS services in Dorset, Save Dorset NHS is calling for the public to protest at the Dorford Centre, 2 Bridport Road, Dorchester DT1 1RR, on Wednesday 20th September, from 10am, when the DCCG board meeting is to be held, or asking the public to lobby their local Members of Parliament and Councillors.

Claudia Sorin says "People across Dorset are angry about these shabby proposals to 'save' £229 million pounds a year from our Dorset NHS budget, while pretending that the result will be some kind of improvement. It's definitely not an improvement and we're going to fight these untested cuts every inch of the way."



SAVE DORSET NHS is an umbrella group comprising of the main campaign groups across Dorset:- Save Our Beds, Save SCBU, Kingfisher & Maternity at DCH, The Dorset Health Campaign, Swanage Labour Party Campaign to Save Poole A&E, Keep Our NHS Public Dorset.

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