…………..,MP for……

House of Commons

20 Dean’s Yard

City of London SW1A 0AA

 Your name and address

02 November 2012

Dear

I am writing to express my deep concern about the detail and implications of the recent far reaching recommendations issued by the Trust Special Administrator (TSA, Mr Matthew Kershaw) appointed to the failing South London Trust (SLT) under the previously unused Unsustainable Provider Regime.

Mr Kershaw’s key recommendation is to close the Accident and Emergency department of SLT’s successful and solvent neighbour Lewisham Healthcare NHS Trust, to downgrade Lewisham from its current acute Trust status, and to sell a large proportion of its estates, whilst both Accident and Emergency departments in the soon to be former South London Trust remain open and a proportion of the South London Trust debts repaid.

It is also understood that Mr Kershaw, as part of his remit, was asked by the Secretary of State to look at the whole of South East London, rather than just the failing institution he was appointed to, and that some of his re-modelling work is now be used in other areas of the country in a similar way.

Whereas Lewisham Healthcare NHS trust is currently making a surplus and was in the process of applying for Foundation Trust status, this good performance is to be jeopardised by a set of *assumptions* about the rapid development Community Care, from which the TSA is projecting a future small deficit and therefore basing his recommendations.

Although it is said that the Unsustainable Provider Regime is not intended to force cuts “through the back door”, this however appears to be the proposed outcome for Lewisham.

The closure of the Accident and Emergency Department in Lewisham (upgraded in 2012 to the cost of £12M) and the downgrading of Lewisham Healthcare Trust from its Acute Trust status, if allowed to proceed, would deprive the Lewisham population of a reputable, necessary and very well used state of the art facility.

It would force the local population of a deprived area to travel further afield to access emergency care and to visit admitted family and friends. This in turn would increase health inequalities, particularly as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich, which has been earmarked as the alternative, has poor public transport links.

Because this threat has been brought upon the Lewisham population as part of the Unsustainable Provider Regime warranted by the failure of another institution, the Regime special features are applicable, including 30 day consultation only, no right of appeal and a rapid implementation. The local population of Lewisham is therefore effectively to be deprived of its democratic rights to examine, duly consider and take effective action against a harmful proposal.

In addition to setting a dangerous precedent for all patients and hospitals in the country, these proposals, if allowed to go ahead, would send the highly undesirable message that failure of a public institution is positively rewarded, and that its outcome and viability are inversely related to its performance.

As your constituent, I request that you oppose the downgrading of Lewisham Hospital and the closure of its Accident and Emergency Department as part of the Unsustainable Provider Regime applied to the South London Trust, from which Lewisham is independent.

I also ask that you urge Mr Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health, to revoke the current recommendations around South East London and for him and Lord Grayling to review the legislation around the Unsustainable Provider Regime before the sinister and astonishing apparent outcome of the first application of the legislation is allowed to go any further.

I look forward to your response and thank you in advance for your support in this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]