**Press Statement from Lewisham Healthcare NHS Trust

Over 25,000 demonstrate in Lewisham against closure of successful hospital**

On Saturday 26 January, over 25,000 people from around the country took e to the streets in protests against Government proposals to close emergency and maternity services at Lewisham Hospital – a clinically high performing and financially solvent Trust – due to problems at the neighbouring South London Healthcare NHS Trust.

Dr Helen Tattersfield, local GP and Chair of Lewisham’s Clinical Commissioning Group, said the ‘Save Lewisham Hospital’ group had been overwhelmed by the support from people around the UK who came to the march:

“It just highlights that this a national issue. This is the first time the Government has put in place its ‘failure regime’ for an NHS Trust –South London Healthcare – and the proposed solution is to destroy services at a separate neighbouring Trust which is high performing and financially solvent. The ‘failure regime’\* is set to be used many more times across the UK, so if the Government can close down Lewisham Hospital then no successful hospital in the country is safe.”

LBC presenter Nick Ferrari has spoken on air about how Lewisham Hospital saved his son’s life, and was one of the speakers at the event. He said:

“Lewisham A&E has saved countless lives. The Maternity Unit has brought thousands of lives into this world. Any closure would be like an act of criminal vandalism.”

Jeremy Hunt is due to make his decision on the proposals to close Lewisham’s A&E and to close full maternity services by 1 February.

Dr Louise Irvine, local GP and chair of the ‘Save Lewisham Hospital’ campaign, added:

“There is agreement from [GPs across South East London that these plans are not safe](http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/petition-to-health-secretary-to-save-lewisham-2/). Mid Staff shows the dangers of putting finances before patient safety, and this is in danger of happening here.

“Ironically, the plans do not even make sense financially, as [noted in the press](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/jan/13/lewisham-hospital-fury-bill-closure). Lewisham Healthcare NHS Trust is a successful organisation and wants to work with GPs, local people and patients to make the savings needed without destroying vital services, but the Government “special administrator’ has refused to listen.”

A spokesperson from Lewisham Healthcare NHS Trust said:

“We have been overwhelmed by the support from patients, GPs, MPs, partners and local people from across London and beyond. We do not agree with the proposals to close vital emergency and maternity services at Lewisham. We have said we should be allowed to determine the future of services ourselves. In looking at how we maintain high quality services while meeting financial challenges which the NHS faces, we would include proper engagement with GPs, patients and the public.”

The march went past Lewisham Hospital and ended at Mountsfield Park for a festival, including music from the drummers who performed at the Olympic opening ceremony.

Key facts on Lewisham Hospital

· [Rated one of the top 40 hospitals in the UK](http://www.lewisham.nhs.uk/news/news/chks_top_40_hospital.aspx)

· [Recently received an “outstanding” rating for children’s safeguarding from Ofsted/Care Quality Commission](http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/reports/20120528%20NHS%20Lewisham%20CQC%20Final%20Report.pdf)

· The Trust’s new [£12 million emergency department](http://www.lewisham.nhs.uk/news/latest_news/new_emergency_department_opens.aspx) opened in April 2012, with Gareth Malone doing a performance in the department with the Trust choir (shown on BBC2)

· Delivered 3,973 babies in 2011/12. In 2012/13 the Trust is on target to deliver 4200 babies.

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\*The failure regime is known as the “Unsustainable Provider Regime”

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