

Our Strategic Aim

The Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign exists on behalf of the Lewisham community to defend Lewisham Hospital and its core acute and maternity services. We will campaign in defence of the emergency department and intensive care services; the maternity department involving integrated midwifery and obstetric maternity services; and acute services for children and adults, including care of the acutely ill elderly.

We recognise that the merger of Lewisham Healthcare with Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich, has taken place and that a new trust, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust (LGT), was formed on 1st October 2013. There is a strong similarity of health needs between the deprived populations of Lewisham and Greenwich. The viability of healthcare to the two communities (projected to be over 600,000 people in 2015/16) depends on the survival of *both* hospitals and *both* community health services, working with local primary and social care. We will campaign for the retention and strengthening of integrated health care provided by our National Health Service to these communities.

This is taking place in the context of unprecedented Government attacks on the NHS as part of an overall policy to shrink the NHS which entails plans to close hospitals and services throughout England, cut NHS funding (£ 20 billion by 2015 and a further £ 30 billion by 2019) and privatise NHS services, through enforcement of competitive tendering and the “Any Qualified Provider” regime (enabled by the Health and Social care Act 2012).

Our Campaign and the Political Context

The Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign is a phenomenal community based campaign that was set up to defend Lewisham Hospital against the threat of closure of its A&E, acute services and maternity, which would mean its closure as a district general hospital.

The Campaign has been a huge success so far in mobilising thousands of people in Lewisham

and beyond, and taking on the Government in a judicial review of the plans. At this point we have the upper hand. Everything we have done so far, big or small, has been a positive contribution to our overall success. Our high court victory was historic as it challenged the first use of legislation that if left on the statute books could be used to close and downgrade hospitals all over England.

Our message is that this was a victory in just one battle in a long war not only to protect our local services but the whole NHS.

A successful outcome of the Lewisham case will have far reaching implications for hospitals and Trusts all over the England. It will leave the Government's policy of using the 2006 "unsustainable provider" legislation to close hospitals subject to legal challenge and public scrutiny, and so increasingly unsustainable and unworkable, particularly where there are well-supported community campaigns. The Save Lewisham Hospital campaign is an inspiration around the country.

What has made our Campaign successful so far is that it has reached into every sector of the community, mobilised thousands of people and formed a broad based united front of all those who oppose the closure of Lewisham Hospital. The Campaign has been inclusive of a wide range of people and organisations and this has been an essential aspect of its success.

We recognise that Lewisham Hospital cannot be safe unless the NHS is safe; that the threats to Lewisham Hospital are part of a wider attack on the NHS (cuts, privatisation, and Private Finance Initiatives (PFI)); that a victory in one area is a victory for all; that solidarity with campaigners in other areas is vital; and that we have to take up and campaign on the wider issues that threaten Lewisham as part of the NHS.

As a campaign we have already done a lot to broaden our work and link with others. We have:

• Raised the issues of cuts, privatisations and PFI in our public meetings and campaign literature.

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- ☐☐ Commissioned John Lister to produce a critique of the TSA (Trust Special Administrator) proposals for SLHT (South London Healthcare Trust): “Saving the cancer, sacrificing the patient,” which focused on the PFI scandal.
- ☐☐ Invited Allyson Pollock and Colin Leys to give evidence on the wider threats to the NHS at the Lewisham People’s Commission of Inquiry.
- ☐☐ Campaigned against the implementation of Section 75 regulations under the Health and Social Care Act that enforce privatisation, including a lobby of Parliament and a meeting inside the House of Commons.
- ☐☐ Campaigned against the EU/US trade agreement.
- ☐☐ Been procuring letters to Monitor (the body set up to oversee the implementation of Section 75) to declare public opposition to forced privatisation of local services, and plan further action in the late autumn.
- ☐☐ Linked with other campaigns, most notably other London campaigns, in the Hunt for Hunt action in Farnham.
- ☐☐ Taken a double decker bus round the other boroughs in SE London as part of building for the January 26 demonstration.
- ☐☐ Taken part in the London-wide demonstration in May against hospital closures.
- ☐☐ Addressed public meetings and rallies for the Ealing, Central Middlesex, Whittington, Whipps Cross, Epsom and St Heliers campaigns.
- ☐☐ Met with the Mid Staffordshire hospital campaigners.
- ☐☐ Lobbied the Labour Party conference in Brighton.
- ☐☐ Taken part in the September Manchester demonstration at Tory Party conference.

All these activities alongside: a candlelit vigil outside the hospital, two major marches, an NHS birthday party public celebration, protest outside Downing Street, two ‘buggy army’ protests at the Department of Health, the “Born in Lewisham Hospital” event, a lobby outside Goldsmiths for Question Time, weekly stalls in shopping centres in Lewisham, a big public meeting at Goldsmith’s, the post-Judicial Review Victory Parade and Rally, the enormous show of community unity at the Victory Dance at the Rivoli and much more.

Our strength is our focus on Lewisham: success in Lewisham will inspire campaigns

elsewhere to fight on to defend their hospitals and services. The Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign will be a catalyst to other campaigns. The direct threat to Lewisham Hospital is the reason thousands have come out on the streets to support it. But supporting our hospital means recognising it is still under threat.

It is not immune to all the pressures bearing down on hospitals and NHS services everywhere: cuts, privatisation, PFI. As a campaign we must contribute to the wider battle against these threats and do so in solidarity with other campaigns, sharing our experience and ideas with them, giving and receiving support, doing joint actions and tackling together the issues that affect us all.

Continuing threats to Lewisham Hospital

Regardless of the outcome of the Government appeal, there are likely to be further attempts to close the hospital. The TSA process was not the first attempt and won't be the last. There was a serious attempt to close Lewisham Hospital as a district general hospital in 2008 with "A Picture of Health" which was a reorganisation of services across SE London and which led to the creation of the South London Healthcare Trust of Queen Mary's, Queen Elizabeth and Princess Royal Hospitals. Lewisham was earmarked for downgrading during that period but, due to local campaigning, which included Lewisham Council and the Lewisham healthcare community, involving local health activists such as , the "Save our HS Group of Lewisham Pensioners Forum and Lewisham GPs, this plan was abandoned.

Nevertheless this was always seen as unfinished business – a point made by NHS London and also implied in the letter from the TSA, Matthew Kershaw, to Secretary of State, Jeremy Hunt, in April 2012.

If we win the appeal and the TSA's use of the "unsustainable provider" legislation is deemed unlawful the Government could come back again to try to close Lewisham using the standard reconfiguration process that is currently being applied in North West London, South West London and other areas of the country. Lewisham could be included in proposals to try to

close nine London hospitals that were announced in a document published in the summer by NHS London (an organisation that was abolished under the NHS reforms but already resurfacing in a new form and likely to continue to push these plans).

If we lose the appeal we will continue a mass campaign protesting against the decision, involving the whole community and hospital staff, and liaising closely with other campaigns against hospital and service cuts and closures across London and England.

Regardless of the outcome of the appeal we will stay vigilant and ready to oppose any plans that lead to downgrading or loss of our hospital or other NHS services locally.

The Facts about the Merger:

The Campaign has to take account of and respond to the changed circumstances of a new NHS Trust created by the merger of the Lewisham and Queen Elizabeth, Woolwich (QEH) hospitals.

1. Lewisham Hospital has stated that its reason for applying to take over management of QEH was because, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, all NHS hospital trusts have to become foundation trusts (FTs) or be taken over. **In effect all previously existing NHS trusts are to be abolished.**

2. After it applied for FT status Lewisham Healthcare was told by the Trust Development Authority (TDA) in summer 2012 that it would never be approved as a foundation trust. Within the TSA process, Lewisham Hospital Trust (LHT) was suddenly deemed too small and financially insecure to be an FT. That meant it would eventually have to be taken over by another Foundation Trust, like Kings, or even by a private company, as happened to Hitchingbrook Hospital which was taken over by the private equity funded company, Circle Health. Lewisham Healthcare's response to this threat was to propose merger with QEH to create a bigger trust that would have more chance of getting foundation trust status in its own right so that it would not be under threat of take-over.

Concerns about the merger:

1. It is clear that this merger carries risks – mainly because the new Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust will inherit the PFI debt of QEH. This could lead to financial difficulties and threats to jobs and services at both Lewisham and QEH.
2. However without the merger Lewisham was also facing great risks to its future. Along with all other hospitals serving deprived communities, Lewisham Hospital's funding has been cut by 4+% per annum and now faces a 5-6% cut per annum in the coming period, and more cuts are planned for the future. The TSA had already put funding cuts in place for QEH for 2013/14 and QEH would face similar challenges whichever organisation it was in. So without a strong community campaign, the outlook for Lewisham, along with many other London hospitals and hospitals in other parts of England is dire. That's the reason that a campaign to save services in Lewisham has to look at the bigger picture and tackle the wider threats.

Some people have asked why the campaign is not opposing the merger

It seems to us that it would be wrong for the Campaign to take a position for or against the merger. The hospitals are now officially and formally merged, this much is clear. What is less clear is what 'opposing the merger' would mean in practice.

We are a broad based campaign organised around opposition to closure of services at Lewisham Hospital. Within this there is room for a range of views towards the merger. Some people are opposed to it as a matter of principle while others see it as a pragmatic response to an even riskier situation.

Our existence is contingent on the support of a spectrum of people and groups with different opinions. There should be room for all those views within the Campaign as long as we stay focused on our primary aim, which is opposition to the closure or downgrading of Lewisham A&E, Maternity and other acute services.

The actual form in which NHS services are organised and managed has changed many times over the years (15 “reorganisations” in 30 years) but what is vital is that they should remain as NHS provided services and not be taken over by private companies, which is the central purpose of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Looking at recent changes in healthcare policy, accelerated since the coming into force of the Health and Social Care Act, where private companies have been invited to wield the axe, it would send a mixed message to oppose an NHS organisation running two local hospitals along with community services.

Alternative unaccountable providers of healthcare are more likely to decimate local services, cut jobs and conditions and erode workforce unity, as has been happening in the drug and alcohol sector locally. The drive for marketisation and cuts does not come from a merged Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust it comes from the Government via the Department of Health and the TSA. Adopting a stance on a trust or its merger is not the best way to save the NHS or to save services in Lewisham Hospital, when our biggest threats are governments and their policies, and private health care. The merger will bring together two NHS trusts and community health services in Lewisham to create a bigger NHS trust. Many staff at QEH feel this is a better alternative than the fate that could have awaiting them, namely a Hitchingbrooke style takeover by Circle Health. Reconfiguration pressures exist regardless.

The strength of our campaign so far is clarity of focus – that we are a single issue campaign to save our local hospital. That does not stop us taking up wider issues that impact on our hospital. But it would not make sense to be campaigning against the newly formed Lewisham and Greenwich Hospital NHS trust.

First and foremost we support the NHS providing local services rather than undermining local NHS organisations, though we will continue to challenge with energy and commitment any cuts and closures that the new Trust may attempt.

The merger leads us directly to considering how we in Lewisham relate to the people of Greenwich and Bexley who will be using the newly merged hospital trust, and also the staff who work in QEH. It will be important to link up with campaigns there to defend services for all.

PFI (Private Finance Initiatives)

The issue of PFI is one that the Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign has raised repeatedly throughout its campaigning. We commissioned John Lister early on in the campaign to produce a paper analysing the TSA proposals and the role of PFI, invited Allyson Pollock to the People's Commission to talk about PFI, and invited speakers who talked about PFI at our campaign public meetings. The Save Lewisham Hospital campaign also wrote to Andy Burnham, shadow Secretary of State for Health, stating the need for a solution to the PFI problem, should the Labour Party get into power.

The merger brings the issue of PFI even more centre stage to us now. The debt of QEH has been cleared by central government funding but the newly merged Lewisham and Greenwich NHS trust will take on the future PFI repayments of QEH. These PFI repayments will rise with inflation. There will be a subsidy paid each year to cover the excess cost of PFI, i.e. what the Department of Health has deemed excess charges for the seven trusts nationally (this includes Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich (QEH) and Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH)) who have the most outrageous PFI contracts.

As a campaign we should:

1. Demand that the PFI subsidy rise each year by the Retail Price Index, just as the PFI repayments do. It seems likely this will be the case as the Trust Development Authority (TDA) report, published recently on the web, indicates a PFI subsidy rising each year for the next 5 years from £ 12 million a year to £ 16 million a year. The Campaign has sent a FOI request to the TDA for full details of the PFI payments and subsidy for the life of the PFI.

2. The PFI subsidy will not prevent PFI burdened trusts from being threatened with bankruptcy and forced closure. PFI is also a major threat to other hospitals in the UK and we should be part of a national anti-PFI campaign. The campaign should press for the removal of the new LGT, and by implication all NHS trusts, from responsibility for continuing and future PFI debts. NHS funding should revert to the government according to the founding principles of the NHS (e.g. taxation and public sector borrowing). We should actively lobby our local elected politicians on this point as part of the national PFI campaign.

3. Campaign against the way the NHS, locally and nationally, is being starved of money and forced to make cuts through other means than PFI. For example, reduction in tariffs paid to hospitals for items of service; change away from funding on deprivation basis in South East London; enforced 1% end of year 'profit margins' demanded by Monitor; enforced tendering of services.

A new issue that has arisen is the recent announcement by the TDA that the total cost of the TSA process for dismantling the South London Healthcare Trust and reorganising services will be £ 200 million more than originally envisaged by the TSA. We need to clarify where this extra money will come from and ensure that it is not coming out of the local health economy in South East London. We will demand that such funds should be paid by central government.

Campaign objectives

The following objectives flow from what has been discussed above:

1. We will continue to defend Lewisham Hospital and the full range of services it provides for the Lewisham community and others from adjacent boroughs who use Lewisham Hospital. We oppose the closure of acute medical, surgical, children's and maternity services, the intensive care unit and the Emergency Department (ED /A&E).
2. We will campaign for the retention and strengthening of access to safe and good

clinical services to both populations of Lewisham and Greenwich. The two communities each need access to a local ED, maternity and full range of services. We will oppose any future proposals to reduce health services provided by the LGT in Lewisham or Greenwich.

3. We expect transparency around the financial impact of the QEH's PFI contract, which has previously undermined the financial stability of QEH and the SLHT. We ask for clarity on the subsidisation of PFI from national central funding. We will join others in campaigning for an end to PFI at a national level.

4. We will work with the Greenwich community and staff in support of our local NHS and with relevant NHS campaigns working to defend NHS services, especially with other London campaigns to challenge the programme of hospital closures in the capital.

5. We recognise the threat of NHS privatisation from the Health and Social Care Act and will continue our anti-privatisation work both locally and by supporting national campaigns on this.

6. We recognise the threat to local and national NHS services from the NHS budget cuts and will campaign against these and demand that our NHS receives the funding it needs.

In doing this we will continue as a broad based, inclusive, united front campaign, welcoming all who agree with our aims.

Practical proposals for action over the coming period:

1. Fight the Government's appeal against the judicial review decision in July.

2. Continue to do regular stalls and engage and inform the local community, building support to save Lewisham Hospital services.
3. Launch the findings of the Lewisham People's Commission of Inquiry report.
4. Support the Unite the Union "People's Inquiry" into healthcare in South East London this December.
5. Publicise within the community the wider issues affecting our NHS. We should organise a joint meeting for Lewisham and Greenwich to discuss shared issues and how we can campaign together. We will continue to liaise with other campaigns in London and around the country fighting hospital closures and attacks on the NHS.
6. Demand that this present and any future government deals with the PFI issue.
7. Monitor and defend all jobs at every level in association with the workforce and unions in the newly merged LGT, including local community and mental health services.
8. Monitor and oppose all cuts at every level of the new LGT in association with the workforce and unions in the newly merged trust, including local community and mental health services.
9. Oppose privatisation moves, for example the proposed tendering of the Edward Street mental health project (Deptford) to "Any Qualified Provider".
10. Continue to petition Monitor to oppose privatisation locally, and to engage with the Clinical Commissioning group (CCG) locally to ensure Lewisham services remain with the NHS.
11. Continue to support Save Lewisham Hospital campaigners who are building the Unite the Union branch across the two hospitals and encourage all health unions and

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staff associations to work together to defend services, jobs and conditions.