



The buggy army assemble outside the Department of Health.  
 BELOW: Jessica Ormerod with Flora Mewis, two, at the march

# BRAVE HEARTS

## Buggy army marches against Lewisham A&E and maternity cuts

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A BUGGY army brandishing heart-shaped balloons protested to save their beloved Lewisham Hospital, as campaigners launched their own legal challenge against the plans.

Close to 150 mums and babies congregated outside the

Department of Health last week to deliver the message: "Have a heart Hunt".

It comes after Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt approved plans to downgrade the hospital's A&E and maternity services in spite of overwhelming opposition and a 25,000-strong march last month.

Lewisham mums also gave Valentine's Day-themed gifts including a bouquet of roses made

from babies' socks — each wrapped with the individual stories of infants saved at the hospital.

Protest co-ordinator Vicky Penner, whose three-year-old son Sam was saved by hospital staff, said: "The mums are keen to persuade Mr Hunt to re-think his attempt to vandalise the excellent, financially successful and much-needed Lewisham hospital."

The 41-year-old, who lives off Shooters Hill Road, said: "The mums are angry and are going to be more forceful."

"These are some of the kids who would already have died if they had to have been ferried off by an ambulance somewhere."

Catherine Paton, 42, of Lee High Road, had a ruptured appendix while she was eight months pregnant.

She said: "There is no way I would have made the trip to Woolwich."

"I think I would have died."

"My daughter found me on the bathroom floor."

"I was rushed into hospital and had surgery straight away."

Jessica Ormerod, 34, who praised staff for delivering her three children safely, said: "My

daughter had her cord around her neck, her heart rate had dropped."

"I was very tired and losing quite a lot of blood."

"It is very frightening the idea I would have had to transfer to any hospital at all."

"Woolwich is a long way, no matter what the nonsense numbers they used."

The protest was followed by a rally staged outside Lewisham Hospital last Friday with speakers including Mayor of Lewisham Sir Steve Bullock.

### LEGAL FIGHT CHALLENGES PLANS

● THE legal fight against Mr Hunt's proposals is intensifying with a second challenge launched by Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign. It will be on the grounds the four key criteria set by Mr Hunt and announced in the House of Commons on January 8 were not met before the decision was made — support from GP commissioners, public and patient engagement, clarity on clinical evidence and consistency with patient choice.

There are just two days left for Mr Hunt to withdraw his decision before Lewisham Council launches legal action.

The council says the South London Healthcare Trust administrator did not have powers to make recommendations for neighbouring Lewisham Hospital.

To donate to the council's fight, visit [lewisham.gov.uk/legalchallengefund](http://lewisham.gov.uk/legalchallengefund)



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