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Lewisham Hospital campaigners ask courts to stop closure



Martin Barrow Health Editor

Published at 4:40PM, March 11 2013

Campaigners have launched legal action in the High Court to prevent the closure and downgrading of services at Lewisham Hospital in south east London.

They claim Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt exceeded his powers when he agreed a major reorganisation of their hospital in response to the financial collapse of a neighbouring NHS trust.

South London Healthcare Trust is to be broken up after being put into special administration with debts of around £150 million. Although Lewisham NHS Trust is not in financial difficulties, it has been caught up in the proposed restructuring of NHS services in south east London.

More than 25,000 people took to the streets of Lewisham in protest against the changes, which include the closure or downgrade of A&E, maternity services and intensive care.

The High Court action by [Save Lewisham Hospital](#), a campaign group that claims the support of patients, GPs and hospital staff, has been launched by the legal firm Leigh Day.

Legal challenges are increasingly being used by local communities against hospital closures and re-organisations, frustrating attempts by health chiefs to implement reforms.

The proposed re-organisation of children's heart services is currently

1 of 2

People take part in a demonstration against the closure of some services at Lewisham Hospital Peter Macdiarmid/Getty

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before the High Court following challenges by Leeds General Infirmary and earlier by London’s Royal Brompton.

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