



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP
Secretary of State for Health
Richmond house
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

Reference: DGHMat/080611/SL

Date: 8/6/11

I wanted to raise again an issue of huge concern locally – the continued provision of consultant-led maternity, special care baby services and inpatient gynaecology services at both the Eastbourne District General Hospital and Conquest Hospital (Hastings) sites. Not long ago, there was a decision made by the local PCT/Hospitals Trust to 'single site' these services which provoked massive opposition locally. A cross-party and cross-community 'Save the DGH' campaign was formed to oppose the proposals which East Sussex Health Overview Scrutiny Committee referred to the Secretary of State for Health.

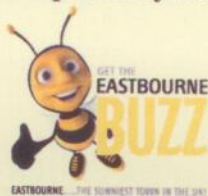
A fundamental cause for opposition was the distance of over 20 miles on poor roads between the two units.

In any event, the then Secretary of State Alan Johnson asked the Independent Review Panel to investigate the proposals. In July 2008, they concluded that the proposals had not "made a clear case for safer and more sustainable services for the people of East Sussex" and that "consultant-led maternity, special care baby, inpatient gynaecology and related services must be retained on both sites."

In addition, they recommended that a strategy be developed to ensure the delivery of their recommendations and involving local people. The IRP's recommendations were accepted in full by Alan Johnson.

Now barely three years later, the Hospitals Trust have announced their own new review of maternity services. Yet in my view, and that of many others, they have failed to implement fully the original recommendations of the IRP.

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I am therefore writing at the behest of the Campaign Group to ask that the IRP be instructed to suspend the new Review and examine the position, in particular whether their recommendations have been properly and fully implemented. I do so for three reasons.

1. It only adds to uncertainty (and also affects recruitment of necessary staff) to have yet another review. There is no new development which requires it. The issues as to choice and access are exactly the same.
2. With all due respect to the review now announced by the Trust, the IRP was seen by all sides to be independent, expert and well-qualified.
3. As I have pointed out, the IRP will want to review the extent to which their own recommendations have been implemented; and if not, why not.

I understand the IRP need your instruction to re-involve themselves and I hope this will be forthcoming.

With best wishes,

Stephen Lloyd MP
Eastbourne and Willingdon Constituency.

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