



Focus on

from your Abingdon Liberal Democrat
Focus team

Abingdon Hospital

Abingdon Hospital threatened again

Abingdon Community Hospital is one of the Oxfordshire community hospitals threatened with closure by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) because the NHS in Oxfordshire, including the PCTs, is overspending and must balance its finances.

Hospitals and their buildings are expensive to run and the PCT wants to move to more home care support, which is paid for by the council tax payer.

The NHS has acute hospitals such as the JR, Nuffield, Churchill etc. When patients need less intensive care they are moved out into beds in community hospitals such as Abingdon Community Hospital for nursing care, if they are not well enough to go home. If there are not enough beds to move patients to then there is 'bed blocking' in the acute hospitals.

The Government, through Patricia Hewitt, has said that 'Community Hospitals should not close as they are going to be the centres for delivering health care in each locality.'

BUT, the local newspaper has already published proposed plans, which include closing the beds at Abingdon Hospital.

Lib Dems oppose this and want to see Abingdon Hospital retained and improved.



Local MP, Dr. Evan Harris and Cllr Pat Hobby celebrating the last, successful, campaign to save the beds in Abingdon Hospital.

Now they are leading the campaign again to save our hospitals.

Oxfordshire NHS in deep financial crisis

Lib Dems oppose anticipated massive cuts in hospital services

Oxfordshire's Tory MPs voted against extra cash

Oxfordshire's Tory MPs consistently voted against the extra cash that Labour and Lib Dem MPs backed in recent budgets.

Tories voted for tax cuts for the better off instead of more resources for our local NHS and now have the cheek to complain about the funding crisis!

It is a damning indictment of the record of this Labour Government. They promised us that 'things can only get better' and yet, after nearly 9 years in office, people in Oxfordshire are being struck off waiting lists, nurses and doctors are facing redundancy, wards are closing and community hospital beds are under continual threat.

"The Government has caused these financial problems by imposing political 'must-do' targets and extra duties on the NHS locally," says local MP, Dr Evan Harris.

"The local health service has been undermined by being forced by ministers to do expensive deals for treatments with the private sector for ideological reasons which could be done more efficiently in the NHS. Doctors have been treating targets not patients."

The Government has failed to provide enough trained nurses and doctors, or affordable housing for NHS staff, leading to huge spending on agency staff and locums.

Your Views are Needed

Please see questionnaire overleaf

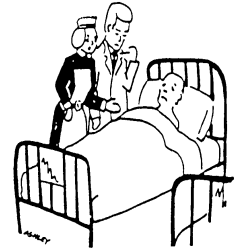
Tories' Oxfordshire County Council Budget - More cuts for the elderly

"The recent Tory County Council budget will mean cuts of up to £1.6m for older people in Social Services," reports Cllr Alan Bryden. It is clear from the budget papers that there are no increases to allow for the fact that there are more elderly people next year requiring services. This will lead to:

- * Fewer much needed home placements
- * Fewer respite care beds – so more exhausted carers
- * Reduced care management – older people waiting longer to have their care needs sorted out
- * No day services – which will increase loneliness, and add to the burden on carers
- * Increases in charges for home support - which are already high enough.

No More Cuts

"Year upon year of cuts to social services under Tory and Labour Governments mean that the most vulnerable local people - the sick, the elderly and the disabled - are facing a bleak time now. When will the Government understand that cutting cash to social services in Oxfordshire hurts the weakest in society the most?" asks Lib Dem Town Councillor Pat Hobby.



Liberal Democrats are demanding an end to social services cutbacks, no more health service cuts and no more wasteful targets for doctors and nurses.

Your Views are Needed

The South West Primary Care Trusts have been reviewing the provision of care for patients, mainly elderly patients, after discharge from the acute hospitals and those needing palliative care.

There will be a consultation by the PCT on the changes in the future care of patients. This care will be limited by the strained resources, the growing elderly population, and changing clinical/government opinions.

We need your views and experiences to ensure Abingdon people are heard. Please take a moment to answer these questions. Use an extra sheet if you need to. Please circle YES or NO

1. Have you or someone you know been cared for in Abingdon Community Hospital? YES / NO
If yes, roughly, how often per week did local family/friends manage to visit whilst there? times
2. Do you think you/they could have managed successfully at home with appropriate care? YES / NO
3. Do you think a patient would prefer to be looked after at home with appropriate care? YES / NO

The plan is to have just one, enhanced, Community hospital for Southern Oxfordshire, possibly either Wallingford or Abingdon.

4. How often per week would you visit a family member/friend if they were a patient in Wallingford Community Hospital and by what means?
5. If Abingdon's beds go should the other facilities such as the minor injuries unit be retained? YES / NO
6. If Abingdon hospital closed the land would very likely be sold off for a private nursing home in which the NHS would pay to use beds. Do you agree with this? YES / NO

Thank you very much for your views which we will pass on to the SW PCT and which will help us in our response to any consultation.

Please send your response to:
Abingdon Liberal Democrats,
c/o Angela Lawrence,
221 Radley Road, Abingdon, OX14 3SQ

Name:

Address:

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Telephone:

e-mail:

I Support Abingdon Hospital

- I would like to help the 'Save the Beds' campaign
- I enclose a donation to help pay for the 'Save the Beds' campaign.

Visit the Party website at
www.libdems.org.uk

