

11th June 2008

Dear Chairman,

Reconfiguration of health services in West Sussex

Following the decision today by the board of the West Sussex PCT to proceed with the reconfiguration of NHS services in West Sussex, we are writing to you to request that, following your own committee's extensive and thorough investigation into the PCT's Fit for the Future proposals, you refer the PCT's decision to the Secretary of State for him to refer it to the Independent Review Panel.

Today's decision will have a huge impact on the healthcare of hundreds of thousands of people in West Sussex. Given profound concerns expressed about the PCT's proposals and the way the consultation exercise was carried out, irrespective of the final recommendations, we believe that the full scrutiny process should be seen through to its conclusion.

Everyone agrees that the decision to reconfigure services was controversial, regardless of the outcome of the decision about the location of services. The PCT, having decided that reconfiguration should proceed, has repeatedly acknowledged during the consultation that the choice of hospital was a close and finely balanced one. For any outcome to secure lasting consent of the public, therefore, it is vital that the decision and the processes leading to that decision, including the criteria, weightings, cost estimates and clinical viability, have been scrutinised to the full extent permitted.

We, the undersigned, represent all the area of West Sussex affected by this decision, including Worthing which is the beneficiary of the decision to centralise a number of services at Worthing and Southlands Hospital. Nonetheless we believe that this matter should be referred to the Secretary of State and thence to the Independent Review Panel to ensure that the final decision and the processes leading to that decision, are safe.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Tyrie MP
Peter Bottomley MP
Nicholas Soames MP
Tim Loughton MP
Nick Gibb MP
Nick Herbert MP
Francis Maude MP

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