

Catherine Beanland

PRESS STATEMENT PORTCULLIS SURGERY, LUDLOW 25th July 2015

An entire Hospital Ward in Ludlow is due to be closed on Friday 31st July without adequate consultation and with only a week's notice.

Portcullis GPs have been informed by Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust in a staff briefing dated 25th July 2015 that Stretton Ward is to be closed and only Dinham ward will continue to have inpatient beds at the Hospital. According to the staff briefing this will bring "many clinical and logistical advantages". In addition Mr Steve Diggory, Director of Nursing and Operations thanked staff "for coming up with the idea".

Portcullis GPs would like to make it clear to the public that we certainly did not initiate this idea and that we were not consulted regarding this change merely informed with only a week's notice. We feel this change is being implemented without adequate consultation of the staff and with no regard to a public consultation and should be stopped in its tracks before it is implemented on Friday the 31st July. We would like to highlight that there will be many disadvantages to this change:

1. Ludlow Hospital has recently had a significant refurbishment and the previously mixed sex wards were separated in order to improve privacy we believe that this change will have a significant impact on the patient's right to privacy in a single sex ward.
2. An identified priority was the creation of a dementia friendly bay in order to ensure dementia patients were treated with dignity and in a suitable environment which now no longer will be possible.
3. Another important project Ludlow GPs were keen to offer was to provide day case ambulatory care such as blood transfusions and intravenous antibiotics for the benefit of the community as a whole, which would have been in keeping with the aims of Future Fit, with the closure of a ward this flexibility to provide additional services will be lost.
4. Finally, we would also like to highlight that in the past two years during the winter there has been a need for additional beds to be staffed in order to support nearby acute hospitals with winter pressures and that the ward closure will result in a lack of additional beds in the winter which will result in additional pressure on local hospitals as well as loss of revenue for the community trust.

Once more we are concerned by the lack of commitment demonstrated to Ludlow by both the Community Trust and Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG) who have shown no interest in investing in healthcare facilities for rural and isolated communities in South Shropshire. With this change we are coming to the conclusion that there is no intention from either the CCG or the Trust that Ludlow will be one of the Urgent Care Centres recommended by the Future Fit program and that instead this is the beginning of the end for Ludlow Hospital.

As GPs in Ludlow we remain committed to continue to work to improve and develop the care its aging and expanding community requires and we remain determined to advocate the needs of our patients in South Shropshire, to obtain the quality of health services they rightfully deserve.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Farnell, Dr Yarham, Dr Beanland,

Ludlow Portcullis GPs