

TOWN OF HARTLEPOOL CHALLENGE

Supporting those who Challenge

Friday, 05 February 2016

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TOHC Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact: E-Mail: Info@tohc.uk

RE: The Local NHS Trusts refusal to engage into the democratic process, (05/02/2016)

Removal of the Assisted Reproduction Unit (ARU), Holdforth Road Site

It is widely felt by this group that today The North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust once more demonstrated their lack of respect and understanding towards the people of Hartlepool and its surrounding areas. Time and time again we have shown the local NHS Trust to be consistently out of touch with the democratic process, its service users and the opinion of the good people to which they serve. Today's decision not to attend is unjustified and reprehensive, their excuses were more akin to school yard bullying and tactics than the level of professionalism people should expect of representatives of the local healthcare trust. We feel that it is morally wrong for anyone to try to stop members of the public and their representatives from asking pertinent questions to those who are paid to deliver a public service. This group would also go as far as to suggest that the failure to show up today by the Local NHS Trust is not only wrong but morally corrupt.

Everyone who met today at the civic centre are stakeholders in the local healthcare arena, many of the members of public were there at their own expense; some paid for childcare, some paid for afterschool clubs for their children, some booked the time off work while others cancelled well laid plans; some may say that the councillors were paid to be there but even that being said they still had the option not to attend if they did not wish to do so and even those who could not attend had substitutes attend in their places, **So what makes the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust any different?**

Today there was quite a foray from the Local NHS Trust around the attendance of Mohamed El Menabawey and the trusts belief that his opinion was not unbiased, They claim that he is the wrong person to give a full and frank report on the state of the infertility and reproductive services at Hartlepool Hospital. We disagree, Firstly Dr Menabawey was one of the founders of the ARU and spearheaded its rise from vision to reality, not only was he a consultant within Hartlepool until 2008 he has since become an inspector of the service and travels around the country to monitor and advise different units. It should also be said that the current guidance and standard working practices utilised by the majority of ARU's in the UK were designed and built upon from the work undertaken by good Doctor, his counterparts and those who have followed him after his time at the Hartlepool unit where his legacy continues with those who continue to make advancement in this field.

We would also put forward the argument that it is about time we had someone local to give advice to the "Lay people" as the chairperson of today's committee so gently put it, who can advise the council to what the local populous are feeling and their opinions. Time and time again we have had so called independent experts giving their opinion on the healthcare within Hartlepool who have either not been listened to when they go against the trust and its plans or get banded around as gospel when they do fall in line with the trusts obscured and unfocused vision; It was a breath of fresh air for once to have the things which many of our members have said time and time again being listened to even if it was via the good doctor.

It was uncomfortable for all those in attendance to see today's committee arrive to its senses and there was an obvious distain centred squarely on the behaviour of the Local NHS Trust. We believe that for the first time today the council officials present have felt angered, upset and lied to by the people they have in the past thought to be 100% credible and trustworthy; without sounding patronising we would like say to the members of the council present: That feeling you got today of anger, distrust and hurt can only be shadowed by the way in which our members have been feeling, over the last decade more and more people have seen through the thin veil upon which the Local NHS Trust has cunningly used to obscure and hide the true reasons behind why they wished to close services. We have said suggested and openly stated that the Local NHS Trust has been lying and exaggerating their reasons to service closures to Hartlepool Hospital to such a point that many have looked upon us as the madman in the corner who has nothing but conspiracy theories.

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We hope that this feeling you have now will re-emerge and guide you justly while undertaking any and all decisions regarding healthcare within Hartlepool but more so when listening to the Local NHS Trust especially when they put forward another stretched truth, misconstrued fact or downright lie for you to feast upon. This belligerence and inability to hold their hands up when they have got things wrong is one of the sole reasons to why the people of Hartlepool have to access poorly lead and steered service (see CQC Report Feb 2016 for corroboration of this). If the Trust were just to come forward and say that mistakes have been made, we are sorry for this and it won't happen again most members of the public would accept that and move on but to fabricate reasons to why services should be removed is diabolical, fraudulent and wholly wrong. By their actions today the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust representative's showed themselves to be arrogant, untrustworthy, and unsuitable to carry out their roles. We openly call them arrogant because they did not attend today's meeting just hoping that the committee dealing with these concerns would simply roll over and decide to go with them as they have blindly have done so in the past; we openly call them untrustworthy because of their actions not just today but over the last decade has shown them to consistently exaggerate the effects, usage and underperformance of services and after today's allegations this general consensus of not trusting them has only been reinforced especially when our claims towards the NHS Trust actively blocking any chance of recruiting an embryologists were substantiated and backed up.

We listened to one councillor who stated that he had a concern that by cutting off goodwill and co-operation with the local NHS trust would put into jeopardy the wellbeing of some children within Hartlepool, while we do understand and appreciate that the trust has a role to play in these processes this does not mean that they should hold cart blank and be openly backed with whatever they put forward, they have a duty to care to protect not just the most venerable but every walk in society. It is important the duties of this committee are fulfilled and not put to one side in case they upset another stakeholder, if anything the behaviour of the trust and the lack of local urgent and emergency services within Hartlepool is putting the health and wellbeing of everyone at risk which is more of a concern. The law states that the trust and anyone with a duty of care must act in the best interest of all involved and we say to the committee that it is the will of the majority of our members that you put forward a unilateral vote of no-confidence and withdraw co-operation with the North Tees and Hartlepool Hospital Trust, if the Trust then take it upon themselves to act in such a way which jeopardises the lives, health or wellbeing of one or more individuals then this becomes a criminal offence under omissions, murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and assault acts, laws and statutes. It is about time the local council, their representative's and committees stood up for the people of Hartlepool and demand what is rightly needed. Today they got upset and offended by the Local NHS Trust's lack of co-operation, level of disregard to everyone but themselves and irrelevant and made up excuses. This is just one occasion, this has happened countless times in the past the only difference is that those who were misled and lied to were normal members of the public this has got to change, it is time for the general public and the people that they vote to represent them join together and stand up to these single and narrow minded people, now is the time to act and give back a truly first rate health service to the people of Hartlepool.

It is also a grave concern that the Local Clinical Commissioning Group has failed in undertaking its own due diligence, it was confirmed that they acted upon the word of the Local NHS Trust and did not put in place its own checks to make sure that the information they were supplied with was fully and wholly correct, it is obvious that in the past the CCG has backed the Local NHS Trust blindly but this must stop, the CCG was put in place to be impartial from the trust and if today's allegations are upheld it would suggest that they were compliant to the Trusts misleading statements and reports by their ignorance.

We will be watching the events of today unfold and continue to actively engage with decision makers in the campaign to bring services back to Hartlepool Hospital.

Yours faithfully

Stan Cronin
Town of Hartlepool Challenge Chairperson