

Major risk to life: Government must stop plans to shut A&Es and ICUs



At a time when the nation is facing its worst crisis since WW2, the Government wants to downgrade major acute hospitals says GMB Union

GMB, the union for NHS staff, is demanding plans to close A&E and Intensive Care Units at two South West London hospitals are stopped.



The Sutton, Merton and Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Groups are engaged in a public consultation with a view to downgrading Epsom and St Helier Hospitals in South West London and Surrey.

Under the plans, A&E and Intensive Care Units, as well as other acute services, will be removed from Epsom and St Helier Hospitals.

The services under threat are

Accident & Emergency

Consultant-led Maternity

Paediatrics

Intensive Care

Cancer Care

Coronary Care

Emergency Surgery

Emergency Medicine

The proposals are part of the Government's Sustainability and Transformation Plan, which is a national cost cutting exercise.

The 44 Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships across England are tasked with cost cutting and 50% of them include proposals to reduce acute bed numbers or the number of A&E departments.

The plans were confirmed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget on 11 March 2020, the same day that the World Health Organisation declared the coronavirus a pandemic.

Following several public meetings organised by GMB, the union has now lodged its response to the consultation, rejecting all of the proposals as a major risk to life.

Helen O'Connor, GMB Regional Organiser, said:



“At a time when the nation is facing its worst crisis since the Second World War, the government wants to downgrade major acute hospitals, reduce the number of hospital beds, reduce the number of consultant doctors and make it harder for people to get to hospital.

“The proposals will lead to more deaths.”

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