

The following open letter has been sent by Stroud Against the Cuts to the Chief

Executive and Chair of NHS Gloucestershire, and to the local press. SATC urges

members of the public, in particular health workers, to write similar letters to the PCT

and their elected representatives, making their views known. Letters can be sent

via email to jan.stubbings@glos.nhs.uk or in the post to Jan Stubbings, Chief

Executive, NHS Gloucestershire, Sanger House, 5220 Valiant Court, Gloucester Business

Park, Brockworth, Gloucester, GL3 4FE (You may also want to send copies to the

non-executive directors who make up the board helen.miller2@glos.nhs.uk ,

ingrid.barker@glos.nhs.uk , richard.busby@glos.nhs.uk , alan.elkin@glos.nhs.uk ,

bill.fishlock@nhs.net , robert.graves@glos.nhs.uk , anne.noble@glos.nhs.uk ,

rob.rees@glos.nhs.uk). If you are an elected representative and would like your name

will be saddled with extra VAT and substantial extra costs for administrative functions that were previously provided centrally by the NHS.

It will no longer be publicly owned or accountable and the public will have little right of redress if problems occur. Within three years – or much sooner, if services are judged to be failing – services will be opened up to the possibility of a private sector takeover.

In Hull, within
three months

of transfer to a CIC private companies were invited in to

cherry pick and take over clinics that were perceived to be failing. Cut loose from the NHS family our health services will no longer be able to draw on NHS expertise, funding reserves, purchasing power and economies of scale. They will be far more vulnerable to takeover by multi-national companies in the future, particularly in the light of changes proposed in the Health and Social Care Bill. We actually have direct evidence of this: in the first test of this policy, Central Surrey Health lost its bid for contracts for community services to a private healthcare company owned by Virgin.

We know staff are proud to work for the NHS and are angry that they were not given a proper say in this proposal. Time and again we have heard staff say that hardly anyone supports this transfer. Consequently we believe that skilled frontline staff will leave (indeed, are already doing so), placing our local services at risk.

The lack of community engagement means that the proposed CIC cannot possibly succeed against such a widely and deeply felt level of opposition. Few here want this and we suspect that this is your own view also.

Therefore we hope you will concede the clear legal advice as highlighted in the recently issued judicial review which is that

you can legally keep services in the NHS and you

do

not

have to open the services up to private sector competition.

For instance it

would be possible to set up a new NHS trust. There is no legal barrier to this; it would be a matter of Department of Health approval. What you cannot do is just hand NHS services over to a non-NHS body like a CIC without considering matters in a proper and lawful manner. Nor can you truthfully claim that the CIC is the only option and there are no NHS options available, when it is quite clear that in many other areas in England other PCTs have chosen to place these services in existing trusts or newly created trusts and have not considered a CIC to be appropriate. We are very concerned that staff have been given inaccurate information on this matter and hope you will rectify this. Were the legal case to succeed, you will be required to reconsider your decision and we are quite clear that these NHS options will still be open to you. It is only if you deliberately choose to pursue the CIC option that you will have to consider open competition.

We therefore urge you to stop all the uncertainty for staff and patients and accept that the best solution for community services in Gloucestershire lies within the NHS, thus avoiding the need for continuing legal argument and expense.

Yours sincerely,

Stroud Mayor and Stroud District Cllr John Marjoram

Stroud District Cllr David Drew

On behalf of Stroud Against the Cuts – a broad coalition of residents, service users and workers, members of political parties and trade unions and concerned individuals.

Also signed by:

Dr. S. G. Subbuswamy

Gloucestershire County Councillor Steve McHale (Leader of the GCC Labour group)

Gloucestershire County Cllr Brian Oosthuysen

Gloucestershire County Cllr Sarah Lunnon

Gloucestershire County Cllr Sonia Friend

Stroud District Cllr Philip Booth

Stroud District Cllr Molly Scott Cato

Stroud District Cllr Catherine Farrell

Stroud District Cllr Simon Pickering

Stroud District Cllr Martin Whiteside

Stroud District Cllr Simon Pickering

Stroud District Cllr Geoff Wheeler

Stroud District Cllr Paul Denny

Steve Lydon, Chair, Stroud Constituency Labour Party