

PRESS RELEASE 28/02/2012

Contact: James Beecher 07583 497887 or Caroline Molloy 07931 302507

NHS CAMPAIGNERS CALL FOR ACTION BY LOCAL POLITICIANS TO KEEP GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S NHS PUBLIC

Summary: Today, Tuesday February 28th, Stroud Against the Cuts (1) urged its supporters and local politicians to take action to Keep Gloucestershire's NHS Public. In briefing documents launched today, the local campaign group highlighted the variety of NHS options available for the future of Gloucestershire's NHS services (2) called on the Board of NHS Gloucestershire to "ensure the people of Gloucestershire are given a clear choice to keep these services in the NHS". Campaigners also called for the Board to "make urgent approaches to the Department of Health to allow a standalone NHS Trust to be allowed as an option, as it has been elsewhere", and to "ensure the whole decision-making process is fair, transparent and democratic; involving campaigners, patients, the wider public, healthcare professionals, and negotiation with Trades Unions" (3).

To read the full press release, click [Read More](#) below:

□

Caroline Molloy, a spokesperson for Stroud Against the Cuts, said: “We are urging politicians to ensure the Primary Care Trust board pursues the NHS options and consults the public and staff properly”.

James Beecher, Chair of Stroud Against the Cuts added: “Even though the outcome of Michael Lloyd’s application for a Judicial Review was good, that was only the first step. We urge anyone with an interest in the future of our local health services to attend our upcoming public meeting, to keep signing our online petition, and to visit our website to find out more about how they can help the campaign to Keep Gloucestershire’s NHS Public” (4).

In the recent legal case, Gloucestershire health bosses had planned to transfer the county’s community health services, including over 3000 NHS nurses, physiotherapists, health visitors and podiatrists (5), out of the NHS on 1st October 2011. On February 9th, NHS Gloucestershire and Michael Lloyd issued a joint statement in which the Primary Care Trust agreed to withdraw plans to transfer hospitals, health clinics and services out of the NHS. They agreed to go back to the drawing board, to consult the local community and health workers about what they want, and *to seek NHS options, which do not require a competitive tendering process* (6).

This marks the latest stage in a campaign that has involved thousands of people in protests,

public meetings, petitions and fundraising (7). Campaigners have pledged to continue to work with health workers, unions and the general public in pushing for the services to remain within the NHS. A Public Meeting to rally support, entitled 'Save Our NHS – No Privatisation', has been organised, and will take place in The Subscription Rooms, Stroud, on Thursday March 15th, from 7pm. The event is free to attend, but tickets are available from the Sub Rooms Ticket Office, and collection is recommended.

Statements of support from members of the public, health staff, local politicians and national figures are available on the Stroud Against the Cuts website: www.stroudagainstcuts.co.uk, along with further information about the case (8).

Notes for editors:

(1) Stroud Against the Cuts is a community campaigning group set up in November 2010. For more information see: www.stroudagainstcuts.co.uk

(2) NHS options for Gloucestershire's community health services and hospitals include:

- The creation of a new standalone community health Trust for Gloucestershire

(continued overleaf)

- Integration with the 2gether Trust (the county's mental health services body)

- Integration with the local Acute Trust (Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Cheltenham General and Gloucestershire Royal Hospitals)
- Integration with the Great Western Ambulance Service
- Integration with the *South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust*
- Integration with an NHS body from another county

(3) Full copies of the briefings accompany this press release. The section devoted to demands made of the Board of NHS Gloucestershire reads as follows:

“We call on, and *expect*, the Board of NHS Gloucestershire to:

- ensure the people of Gloucestershire are given a clear choice to keep these services within the NHS,
- ensure the whole decision-making process is fair, transparent and democratic; involving campaigners, patients, the wider public, healthcare professionals, and negotiation with Trade Unions,
- vigorously pursue all of the NHS options listed above,
- make urgent approaches to the Department of Health to allow a standalone NHS trust to be allowed as an option, as it has been elsewhere,

- disclose any consideration of these options, both to date and in future, and
- base the criteria for decision-making on patient care and public opinion.”

(4) The petition begun on Friday 3rd February 2012 has over 450 signatures. For the petition text and latest number of signatories see: <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/keep-gloucestershire-s-nhs-public.html>

(5) Without the legal challenge, Stroud General Hospital, Beeches Green health clinic and other community hospitals, health clinics and services in Gloucestershire would have been transferred to a private limited company outside the NHS. The services that would have affected included District Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Specialist Nursing, Out of hours medical and nursing services, Pharmacy, Sexual Health and Chlamydia screening, Podiatry, Dental services, Wheelchair services, Musculo-skeletal services, Telehealth and Specialist Domiciliary care were also to be transferred to Gloucestershire Care Services Community Interest Company. Nine community hospitals (Stroud, Cirencester, Dilke, Fairford, Lydney, Bourton (Moore Cottage), Moreton, Tewkesbury, and the new Vale Hospital in Dursley) and nine health clinics (Beeches Green Stroud, Stonehouse Health Clinic, Cinderford Health Centre, Coleford Health Centre, Lydney Health Centre, Hesters Way Healthy Living Centre, Holts Health Centre Newent, Lydbrook Health Centre, Symn Lane Clinic (Wotton-under-Edge)) were also part of the plans.

(6) The full legally binding statement and Court Order are available at www.stroudagainstdcuts.co.uk, and are excerpted in the attached briefings.

(7) For recent press coverage of the outcome see: <http://stroudagainstdcuts.co.uk/fightback/healthcarecuts/38-healthcare/108-latest-press-coverage-of-keep-gloucestershires-nhs-public-court-case.html>. For previous coverage of the campaign, including public meetings and protest marches, see: <http://www.stroudagainstdcuts.co.uk/fightback/healthcarecuts/38-healthcare/95-latest-press-coverage.html>. Both of these webpages are being updated as regularly as possible.

An Open Letter from the campaign to the Board of NHS Gloucestershire was signed by many local District and County Councillors, and other notable local public figures: <http://www.stroudagainstcuts.co.uk/fightback/healthcarecuts/38-healthcare/100-an-open-letter-to-the-board-of-nhs-gloucestershire.html>

(8) Some of the messages received have been uploaded, but this is an ongoing process, as there are a large number of messages to process. For the latest selection see: <http://stroudagainstcuts.co.uk/fightback/healthcarecuts/38-healthcare/112-messages-received-since-the-outcome-of-the-legal-case-from-staff-gloucestershire-people-and-nhs-campaigners-nationally.html>