

Save Abingdon Hospital Beds You Can Help!

Join The Letter Writing Campaign

Write to Mark Britnell, the Chief Executive of the new South Central Strategic Health Authority. The final decision rests with him.

Mark Britnell needs to know how vitally important Abingdon Community hospital is to the population it serves.

A barrage of letters will be more effective now than another petition.

Mark Britnell,
Chief Executive ,
South Central Strategic Health Authority,
Jubilee House,
5510 John Smith Drive,
Oxford Business Park South,
Oxford, OX4 2LH.

What's the problem?

Abingdon Community Hospital is one of the Oxfordshire community hospitals threatened with closure by the Primary Care Trust (PCT).

Hospitals and their buildings are expensive to run and the PCT wants to move to more home care support, which is provided by the County Council. However, the County Council already struggles to meet the present demand for home care and indeed are already closing respite care beds.

There will be no extra money to pay for the increased demand.

The NHS has acute hospitals such as the JR, Nuffield, Churchill etc. When patients need less intensive care they are moved out into beds in community hospitals such as Abingdon Community Hospital for nursing care, if they are not well enough to go home. If there are not enough beds to move patients to in the right location then there is 'bed blocking' in the acute hospitals.

Here are some points/questions you could include in your letter:

* Travel to more distant hospitals

The majority of patients in community hospitals are elderly with elderly spouses wishing to visit. Many do not have access to cars. If Abingdon hospital closes then Wallingford could well be the nearest community hospital. As was demonstrated by the Mayors of Abingdon and Wantage, the journey to Wallingford Hospital by bus from each of their home towns took over **two hours each way!**

* Community care

With the loss of hospital beds there will be a greater reliance on home care. Will the Health Authority be able to ensure that there is a satisfactory level of care in the community in place, before community hospitals are closed? How will they ensure this while the County Council is closing respite beds?

* Provision of carers

More reliance on care in the community will mean a need for many more carers. Given that there is already a shortage of people willing to do this work, how will the authority ensure that the level and standard of home care will meet the increased demand?