

# KEEP THE HORTON GENERAL



## Who is telling the truth?

After a year of meetings and deliberation followed by a delay of a further year whilst the recommendations of the Horton Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (HHOSC) were in the hands of the Secretary of State for Health, the result of the entire process was approved in Oxford yesterday. The Committee's recommendations had been dismissed in Westminster despite HHOSC making a 'robust case for the intervention of the IRP outlining in the strongest possible terms how the decision to permanently downgrade maternity services at the Horton was not in the best interests of local mothers and babies'. The councillors said it was a tough decision to agree that 'the end of the road had been reached'. Two Labour councillors voted against the motion.

OUHFT Chairman Sir Jonathan Montgomery and Chief Executive Officer Bruno Holtorf were participants in the online meeting whilst KTHG Chairman argued the case for a Judicial Review into the decision.

Retrospectively his main focus was on the question posed by Councillor Alison Rooke who asked Bruno Holtorf, regarding the Trust's future plans for the hospital, 'And how are you going to ensure that you don't leak senior medical staff in the way that the Horton did with Obstetrics?'

Prof Holtorf replied 'In terms of attracting and retaining staff, we're very pleased that our turnover rates are going down in all professional specialties so we're able to retain more people. And also we're able to recruit quite well these days. So in that sense, we're confident that we will build the workforce necessary to operate the Horton in the future.' Mr Strangwood has this week received a message from a mother whose baby was born weeks after Obstetrics was removed from HGH in 2016. Her child was a casualty of the decision as the baby required specialist intervention after the birth and because that was not available has required palliative care ever since. The mother described arriving at HGH late at night this week with the child, now four years old, who was experiencing a fit. The mother reported 'yet again, we have had to endure refusal for admission to the Horton A&E, due to the fact that all the qualified paediatric staff are no longer available in the Children's ward. For some time there has been no open access for documented needy parents. OUHFT has ensured specialist members of staff have been removed, or persuaded to move on by them. Specialists are now only now available at the JR, hence more travel anxiety and hardship for Banbury and North Oxfordshire Hospital users.'

ends

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**For more details contact our Chairman, Keith Strangwood:**

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