



PRESS RELEASE

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Health Union Blasts Local NHS Trust's Cuts Agenda

Cumbria's biggest general trade union the GMB, today attacked North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust (NCUH), which covers both the West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven and the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle, over their plans to make budgetary savings.

Earlier this year NCUH Trust Board had asked its Departments to save £21 million. Recently the Trust Board has announced that they want to slash an extra 6% from all budgets.

GMB Regional Organiser Kevin Young said:

"What is galling is that a couple of years ago North Cumbria NHS Trust undertook a wide ranging and costly public consultation exercise called Closer to Home. The very savings that the Trust Board wants to make, threatens the delivery of services that the Trust spent so much money consulting the community about".

The GMB said that in a recent letter to all employees, the NCUH Chief Executive Carole Heatly, said that it was the Trust's intention to avoid compulsory redundancies or reducing services. But in subsequent reviews, the GMB claims that the demand for savings from the Trust Board, have been targeted at Frontline and Back Office functions, that are an essential element in the provision of acute service delivery and which the local community quite clearly stated they wanted to see retained, in the NCUH's Closer to Home consultation. The GMB indicated that the Trust appear to be using the financial environment as an excuse to asset strip acute services and open the door to private provision.

Mr. Young said:

"Let's be in no doubt, the new Coalition Government's scandalous public sector cuts are going to affect local people who need vital health and other public services. But the North Cumbria NHS Trust is basically using spin as an excuse to hide behind their real agenda, which is to privatise and to cut. GMB members are not going to stand aside and let that happen and neither will local people; especially after the Trust have already, wasted money on public consultation, only to throw it aside a matter of months later".

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