



PRESS RELEASE

UNION ATTACKS NHS TRUST OVER IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

Cumbria's biggest general trade union today announced that it gone into dispute with a major National Health Trust.

North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust (NCUH) which covers the Carlisle Infirmary and West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven is undergoing a Cost Improvement Programme (CIP) to save £21 million of historic debt and have recently announced a series of Departmental Reviews.

The GMB says that one of the Reviews is within Nursing Services and says that on 29 November 2010 NCUH produced a second draft of the Review of Nursing Services.

GMB Regional Organiser for NCUH, Kevin Young said:

"The consensus amongst GMB's members is that this structure is completely unrealistic, unworkable and unacceptable. One of the major concerns is that the proposed reduction in Senior Nurses at Ward/Department level will jeopardise patient care. It also is contradictory to the final report of the then Prime Minister's Commission on the Future of Nursing in March 2010, which stated that immediate steps must be taken to strengthen the role of Ward Sister."

Mr. Young said that the GMB had asked Mrs. Chris Platton, NCUH Director of Nursing Services, for a copy of the Benchmarking Information at the start of December, in order to formulate a response to the latest Review draft and also to scrutinise information.

Mr. Young said:

"The GMB believes the information to be inaccurate and is benchmarking NCUH against some of the worst performing hospitals in the country. GMB still awaits this information and today went into dispute with the Trust on the matter. Unfortunately the Board at NCUH is driven by the need to meet the savings of the CIP in order to achieve Foundation Trust status at the expense of patient care and safety. I would draw the Board's attention to Mid-Staffs Trust where the incompetence and negligence of that Board was exposed with disastrous consequences and I would say to them, do not repeat their mistakes as if you do, patients who are entrusted into your care could well die because you have compromised clinical competency".

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