

## **An Open Letter on Maternity Unit Closures 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

**To the Board of Hospital Trust SaTH**

**To the Governing Body of Shropshire CCG**

We have a simple message for the bosses of Shropshire CCG and SaTH: “Stop treating women and babies with contempt. Stop pretending that rural communities support your maternity cuts. Most importantly, start LISTENING and call a halt to cuts that will place lives at risk.”

We’re told repeatedly that the Midwife Led Units in Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Oswestry are ‘not sustainable’. What does this actually mean?

- It means that hospital trust SaTH has been trying to close them down since 1st April 2016, as part of a package of cuts.
- It means that SaTH REDUCED the number of midwives working at Telford’s Consultant-Led Unit, from 2015 to 2017.
- It means that SaTH took a clear and deliberate decision to treat the lives of rural women and babies as second rate, closing the rural Units again and again to transfer midwives to the Consultant-Led Unit.
- It means that when SaTH FINALLY got around to recruiting more staff last year, it recruited newly qualified midwives – cheaper, but not experienced enough to work on their own in a rural Maternity Unit.

‘Not sustainable’ seems to mean “We’re going to close them down to save money, and we don’t give a damn what anyone thinks”.

The CCG Board is told that there is strong community support for closing our rural MLUs. Really? Our survey of 700 service users, carried out over the last few days, found that 99.6% want our MLUs to stay open for births.

And SaTH continues to put out press releases claiming that rural women ‘choose’ to use the Consultant-Led Unit at Telford. Unlike SaTH, we’ve asked women. Our survey of 520 expectant or recent mothers found that only 11 have actually chosen the Consultant-Led Unit. That’s just over 2%. Far more women are choosing their local MLU – but have found that it’s been closed, and their choice has been taken away. Sorry, SaTH. Making things up isn’t convincing anyone.

Just for the record, we do NOT support your plans. We do not want short term closures, and we do not believe for one second that the solution to short term closures is permanent closure. All we want is safe care – for women in Telford and Shrewsbury AND women in rural areas.

**How about putting human beings and human lives before your cuts on this one?**

**Bobbie Brown, Bridgnorth**

**Ally Hiles, Ludlow**

**Liz Grayston, Oswestry**

Abbey Hamilton, Oswestry

Abby Willan, Oswestry

Abi Williams, Oswestry

Abigail Coleman, Ludlow  
Adam Lockett, Oswestry  
Ailsa Phillips, Weston Rhyn  
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Aimee Peake, Ditton Priors  
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Amanda Lloyd, Ludlow  
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Barbara Maccutchan, Ludlow  
Barbara Roberts, Oswestry  
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Becky Sutcliffe, Ellesmere  
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