



Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
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25 July 2018

Dear Matt

I was sorry you didn't get to answer my question in the House yesterday morning on the Horton. I am sure your predecessor left you a lengthy handover note about my ongoing campaign to see the reinstatement of a full obstetric service at the hospital.

It has been a long and unhappy few years for my constituents in North Oxfordshire who have spent most of their lives fighting for the future of our much loved local General Hospital. I was born there and one of the first speeches I made when I was seven years old was on the hospital's future of the Horton.

Back in 2016, I found out on virtually the last day the House sat before rising for the summer that the Oxford University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust was proposing to suspend the Horton's obstetric service. I had no advance notice and couldn't be at the meeting in Oxfordshire given that it took place on a sitting Wednesday. As there was insufficient consultant obstetric cover at the hospital, it was deemed an emergency and the decision was taken swiftly during the summer with absolutely no public consultation.

Since the suspension took effect, the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group has undertaken a split consultation on their Oxfordshire Transformation Programme (which feeds into the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Sustainability and Transformation Partnership). One of the main recommendations of the consultation was a proposal to make the suspension of obstetric services permanent. The Phase One OTP has been subject to judicial review proceedings and your predecessor also made a referral to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel.

Earlier this year, the IRP instructed the Trust and CCG to look at the decision to suspend the Horton's obstetric service again, and to undertake a full assessment of the options which include the possible rotation of consultation obstetricians across the Trust's sites. This reprieve has been welcomed by everyone across north Oxfordshire, and in the surrounding constituencies of Witney, South Northamptonshire and South Warwickshire who also benefit from the hospital's services.

I appreciate that it is a rather complicated saga and there is a lot to get to grips with. I have enclosed a copy of my submission to the Oxfordshire Transformation Programme Phase One consultation which should help fill in some of the gaps.

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It would be brilliant if you were able to find time in your diary to visit the Horton at some point soon. We are not far from Birmingham if you wanted to consider popping in on your way to or from Party Conference in October.

Yours

Victoria

Victoria Prentis MP