

Dear Berwick Town Councillors

Berwick Hospital Inpatient Beds

I am writing to ask you about the future of the inpatient beds at Berwick Hospital. I live in Rothbury and have been co-ordinating the fight to keep Rothbury's inpatient beds since the CCG closed the ward in September 2016.

<https://www.facebook.com/SaveRothburyCottageHospital/>

There was an article in the Gazette on Thursday which drew my attention to your hospital. In the article, Dr Alistair Blair of the CCG said: '*Our ambition is to create a **facility** which will meet the needs of the community for many years to come and which will help us to better look after the very different and changing needs of our ageing population*'. (my emphasis). You will have seen in Northumberland's Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) that there is a massive stress to shift care away from hospital beds to care at home. Indeed, the CCG are driven to ensure our beds in Rothbury do not reopen.

Looking on the Berwick hospital website, it does use the word 'hospital', so I may well be wrong, but I wondered if you know for sure if they are going to keep your inpatient beds? Ideally your community might be able to secure a hospital/facility like Haltwhistle. But my worry is that they intend to get rid of your inpatient beds permanently.

Community Hospitals Association Research and Media

The organisation that I have been working with is called CHARM:

<http://communityhospitalsresearch.org.uk/>

You will see from their website that research is being conducted '*A Study to understand and optimise community hospital ward care in the NHS*'. This is a funded study. The research will be available later this year, yet the closure of community hospitals is already happening.

This is what they are researching:

The main benefit of our study is to ensure that older people who need rehabilitation in community hospital wards get the same high standard of care regardless of where they live. We will be able to describe the characteristics of a community hospital ward that lead to good outcomes for patients and for the tax payer. We will develop a toolkit to enable NHS teams to improve the service they provide.

<http://communityhospitalsresearch.org.uk/leeds-research-question.htm>

Yet the government are proceeding with the community hospital closures without waiting for the outcomes of this research.

<https://inews.co.uk/essentials/news/health/great-nhs-gamble-full-list-19-hospitals-facing-closure/>

I would be grateful to hear your views and opinions on this, please.

With all good wishes

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Katie Scott

Co-ordinator, Save Rothbury Hospital Campaign