

Defend the Whittington Hospital Coalition  
C/o Whittington Park Community Centre  
Yerbury Road  
London N19 4RS

15 January 2010

Dear Letters Editor,

We are writing as the Defend the Whittington Hospital Coalition to strongly protest against any proposals to shut down the Whittington Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department.

DWHC is a local, non-political group of residents from Islington, Haringey and Camden boroughs, alarmed by the consequences of any such closure that will force us to travel further afield for emergency care.

Axing the A&E would mean incredibly difficult journeys either to a hospital in the centre of London, or to a hospital that is quite a distance from any major tube or bus route, and is surrounded by congested roads for most of the day. Losing the Whittington's A&E is tantamount to a death sentence for some, and creates a hellish journey for most others.

We are urging all sections of the community – the elderly, families, individuals, students, schools, places of worship, businesses and community groups, everyone who uses or is a potential user of A&E services – that's everyone!- to join our non-political, independent campaign to save the Whittington's A&E.

We are at pains to understand why the NHS is about to put forward proposals for changes in services at the Whittington Hospital which include the closure of its vital A&E there. Access to health services, particularly emergency ones, is an important human right in the UK. Islington is the 8<sup>th</sup> most deprived borough in England, and expecting Islington and indeed Haringey residents to travel so much further to one of two hospitals in Camden is to penalize the poorest inhabitants of Islington, which has one of the highest rates of child poverty in London. It is a dereliction of duty of care for the NHS to continue with these proposals.

It is not only the poor that rely on the Whittington A&E however. 80,000 people from all walks of life go there each year, many traveling from Haringey which has no A&E hospital of its own.

It is also an issue of depriving Islington of an important service that would inevitably lead to other closures, as when A&E closes there is an unstoppable cascade which leads to other health services also closing. And that in turn leads to less money being spent on patients and funding being withdrawn.

Fighting for Whittington's A&E is a deep serious issue that cuts right through our social differences. Even local political parties have put aside their differences in support of this campaign. This is a matter of social justice and equality. We would like as many groups and individuals as possible join our campaign to show how passionately people feel on this issue – there is real strength in numbers! Either visit our website at <http://dwhc.wordpress.com/about/> , email us at [defendwhittington@googlemail.com](mailto:defendwhittington@googlemail.com) or telephone us on 020 7263 7817.

Right now we are asking as many people as possible go to the next public meeting at Archway Methodist Church Hall on Monday 25 January at 7.00pm to show to NHS officials just how strongly we, as a community, feel about this indefensible threat to our health service.

We also call on NHS London to listen to the people of Islington, Camden and Haringey, and not to put forward any options that propose the closure of Whittington Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department.

Yours sincerely,

Defend the Whittington Hospital Coalition.