

Defend the Whittington Hospital Coalition

STOP THE CLOSURE OF THE WHITTINGTON CASUALTY DEPT

NHS executives are proposing to close the Accident and Emergency Department at the Whittington Hospital. The area served by the Whittington includes two football stadiums and two prisons, many schools and several colleges. Islington is the eighth poorest borough in the country, with the highest suicide rate. There is no Casualty department in Haringey. So these plans would mean that people in Haringey and Islington would have to go to the Royal Free or UCLH in Camden, or to another hospital in the case of an emergency. In addition to the long distances people would have to go and the risks to lives, this would have the effect of log-jamming provision in the other hospitals, of running down other specialist services, like the intensive care, paediatrics and maternity units at the Whittington, and of reducing medical training there.

This is part of a larger cuts and privatisation plan for hospitals and GP surgeries in London's NHS. It must be stopped!

Defend the Whittington Hospital Coalition was set up to build a united opposition to the proposals to close the Accident and Emergency Department at the Whittington Hospital and to stop the closure, privatisation and run-down of NHS services in our area. We are opposed to any loss of service in any hospital in North London.

Please join our campaign.

We hope that everyone who opposes the plans will

- **sign our petitions, and ask friends and neighbours to do so**
 - **join our campaign**
- **attend the public meeting at Archway Hall on January 25th**
- **bring their friends and colleagues to our demonstration from Highbury Fields to Whittington Hospital on 27th February**

Defend the NHS!

Defend the Whittington Hospital Coalition, Whittington Community Centre, Yerbury Road, London, N19 4RS
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Campaign launched to fight A&E closure

Ham & High - 17 December 2009

A GRASS roots campaign fighting proposals to close the Whittington Hospital's A&E department has begun in earnest.

At its inaugural meeting on Monday, the Defend The Whittington Hospital Coalition saw residents, doctors and patients join forces to form a battle plan.

It includes a petition, street marches and a potential vigil outside the A&E entrance on Highgate Hill.

The move followed a meeting last week when Rachel Tyndall - the NHS boss behind the proposals - faced a barrage of questions from protesters over leaked documents confirming plans to downgrade the Whittington to a "local hospital" with no A&E or specialist services.

Former Islington Carers Centre boss Shirley Franklin was voted in as the coalition's joint chairwoman.

She said: "It's very important we have an overarching campaign. We are not a political organisation - we need to be a broad church.

"We need a joint petition and we want this to have as much whack and power behind it as possible.

"We need a strong visual campaign and we need to work towards a massive demonstration."

She criticised the idea of an NHS consultation over the money-saving proposals as a joke - saying that no-one in their right mind would speak in favour of closing the A&E department.

A coalition march will take place on February 27 against the proposals. Campaign guidelines were also agreed - setting out the aims of preventing the run-down, closure or privatisation of A&E or other key services at the Whittington or north London hospitals.

Candy Udwin, chairwoman of the Camden Keep Our NHS Public Campaign, said: "When you close the A&E wing, it's a bit of a death knell for the rest of the hospital.

"This is not just happening at the Whittington. This is happening across the whole of London. There are billions of pounds' worth of cuts on the horizon."

Haringey Trade Union Council chairman Keith Flett warned that the fight to save the hospital would be hard and could last for years.

"If they can't do it now, they'll still be trying to do it in two or three years' time," he said.

"They will consult - they won't take any notice of what we say but they will say they have.

"Their aim is just to wear us down. Their idea is that they will last longer than we can. We mustn't give up. We've got to keep campaigning."

Protesters vented their fears and frustrations - with some even raising the suggestion that the Whittington could eventually be sold to make room for private developments.

According to the leaked letter from North Central London NHS, the options for a reshuffle of hospital services in Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Camden and Islington are due to be appraised in January 2010.

The next coalition meeting is on January 21st at 7pm in the Whittington Park Community Centre, Yerbury Road, off Holloway Road.