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Deborah Lee
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5 August 2019

Dear Deborah

I am writing to you in my role as a local councillor and parliamentary candidate to raise my grave concerns about reports of the Trust's proposals to downgrade Cheltenham General Hospital's A&E department.

I understand Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust had today been due to announce plans which could lead to the closure of the hospital's A&E department. However, following press reports of that scheduled announcement, we are told that the public engagement and future consultation on these plans will now be delayed. I would be grateful for your response to some questions on this matter.

My understanding is that Urgent Treatment Centres (UTC) are appointment-only services led by GPs and are designed to cater for non-life-threatening situations. This would mean anyone requiring emergency medical treatment would have to travel to Gloucestershire Royal. Will turning the A&E into a UTC be one of the options explored during public engagement, at consultation or potentially both? If a UTC is not to be one of the options, could you outline what the Trust will be presenting?

These worrying latest developments follow the disappointing decision in 2013 to downgrade Cheltenham General Hospital's A&E department overnight. Following that decision, Cheltenham's Conservative MP Alex Chalk was elected with a campaign pledge that he would get the hospital's A&E re-opened on a 24-hour basis. Will this be one of the options at consultation?

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Max Wilkinson
Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate for Cheltenham