

# Public Support for Community Hospitals

22nd November 2016

**"People have a right and duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care."**

Alma Ata 1978 World Health Organisation

Local people are trying to find ways of voicing their opposition to planned cuts to community hospitals across England. Campaign groups are making more use of social media to enable people to voice their support for their local hospitals. They are using actions such as petitions, marches, communications with MPs, and attendance at NHS meetings in order to voice their concerns. They are also preparing to contribute through the statutory consultation process when this takes place. Community groups and members of Leagues of Hospital Friends are becoming involved in campaigns to save their community hospitals from closure or loss of beds. Local people value their local community hospitals, and are clear about the role that they play in providing local accessible care.

In an article in the Telegraph, Chris Hopson, Chief Executive of NHS Providers said: *"Street protests could halt hospital closures."* He pointed out that MPs were joining in the opposition to plans in some areas, and that the architects of the plans had failed to engage local communities. Hopson believes that *"Fundamentally you can't make big changes to service provision without taking local people with you."*

This will be encouraging to the many campaign groups that are now highly active. The collective energy, passion, determination and skill within local communities is very impressive. Local people have much to contribute to the planning of their local health and social care. The campaigns listed below, with links to their sites, include those in Devon, Torbay, Cumbria, Oxfordshire, Durham, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. As more NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plans are released we may expect further campaign groups to assemble.

Campaign groups are using social media such as facebook, 38 degrees and other public action websites to share their views and encourage support and action. These create powerful local news stories. I hope that by sharing links to local campaigns, we can create a supportive network and develop this into a national news story.