

Labour Strategic Theme Motion

Council 7 February 2024

Building a Sustainable Future For Younger People - Motion

Council notes:

- Equal access to local health services in Merton is vital to Building a Sustainable Future for all residents in Merton, including younger people.
- Young people in Merton should not experience inequalities in the accessibility of health services for any reason, including based on the type of health condition experienced or treatment required.
- The provision, quality, and accessibility of services for physical and mental health conditions are of equal importance to each other in Building a Sustainable Future.
- Reduced access to cancer services in Merton could cause negative, knock-on implications on the mental health and broader wellbeing of young people living with cancer in the borough.
- NHS England's shortlisting of the Evelina Hospital and St George's Hospital as options for the location of the new Children's Cancer Principal Treatment Centre for south London, Kent, Medway, Surrey, Sussex and Brighton and Hove, and the Council's firm predilection for children's cancer services to remain at St George's Hospital.
- NHS England's preference for services to be relocated to the Evelina Hospital, and the detrimental impact this would have on patients and parents in Merton and across the region.
- The shared view of patients, parents, and employees at St George's and affected local authorities in south west London that it would be significantly more sustainable, practical, and cost-effective to retain children's cancer care services at St George's.
- The experienced and excellent delivery of specialist cancer care at St George's Hospital for over 25 years, and the dedicated work of nurses, doctors and hospital staff in providing care to this vulnerable group of patients.
- The capital cost of St George's is estimated at £31 million compared to £44 million in transferring the service to the Evelina Hospital.
- Relocating services to the Evelina Hospital in central London would make it harder for parents and children to access treatment and reduce travel options and accessibility for patients.
- Services at St Georges are not stand-alone; specialist staff work across a variety of trauma cases. Therefore, the move of services to the Evelina Hospital may lead to cuts in funding, staff and vital services in south west London and Surrey.
- That one in four children with cancer will have neurooncological cancer that may require urgent neurosurgery, which is available 24/7 at St George's.
- The essential provision of experienced neurosurgeons at St George's Hospital and the lack of specialist neurological care at the Evelina Hospital, meaning ill

and vulnerable children will be transported to Kings College Hospital in Denmark Hill.

Council welcomes:

- The unprecedented support from neighbouring local authorities across Southwest London in campaigning for the consolidation of the Children's Cancer Principal Treatment Centre at St George's Hospital.
- The work of the Chair of the Healthier Communities and Older People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Councillors and Council officers for their advocacy to the NHS Regional Medical Director and NHS England.
- Local cross-party commitments, coordinated by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Civic Pride, to campaign to protect children's cancer services at St George's.

Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to urge her to enable St George's to become the Children's Cancer Principal Treatment Centre for south London, Kent, Medway, Surrey, and Sussex and Brighton and Hove.
- Continue working in partnership with other local authorities, patients, families, and hospital staff across the region to protect children's cancer services.

Cllr Agatha Akyigyina

Cllr Laxmi Attawar

Cllr Slawek Szczepanski