

Croydon University Hospital's Accident and Emergency and maternity services are under threat of closure or downgrading as part of a wider review of NHS services across south-west London. This factsheet explains the background and what you can do to help.

What is BSBV and why are local NHS services under review?

Better Services Better Value (BSBV) was a review of NHS services across South-West London including Croydon. The review aimed to find ways to fund health services taking into account financial pressures caused by the Tory-led Government's failure to increase NHS funding in line with inflation or the growing health needs of our ageing population. The consultation was scrapped in February 2014 after costing £8m because of growing concerns over the proposals it included. Local NHS chiefs are struggling to cope because of the Government's failure to fund the NHS properly. Although BSBV has been cancelled, new proposals will be announced in June which could renew the threat to some local services.

What are the proposals for Croydon?

BSBV published pre-consultation proposals earlier in 2013. Local health professionals originally hoped that no services in Croydon would be listed for closure or downgrading, but when the proposals were published they included closing or downgrading parts of Croydon's A&E unit and maternity services. Although Croydon's services were described as the 'least preferred' option after other services including those at St Helier and Epsom hospitals, they were nevertheless included as an option and were therefore at risk. The public consultation was due to start in summer 2013 but was repeatedly delayed until finally being abandoned in February 2014. New proposals will be made public in June 2014.

What's Labour campaigning for?

Labour wants to see a cross-party campaign with maximum public support to protect our local A&E, maternity and other health services from the threat of closure or downgrading. We want to see proper investment to improve these services instead. We accept the need for change because of the rising costs of providing healthcare to an ageing population, but we do not believe that Croydon – which has the biggest population of any borough in London – should lose these vital health services. We also believe the Government was wrong to waste £3 billion on a top-down NHS re-organisation instead of investing this vast sum of money to improve frontline services including ours in Croydon.

While BSBV was under way, Tory and Lib Dem MPs backed campaigns to save services at Epsom and St Helier's hospitals, but Croydon Tories refused to back a similar campaign in support of Croydon University Hospital.

Has the threat to local NHS services gone away?

Although the flawed Better Services Better Value consultation has been scrapped, the problems that led to it remain. The Government is failing to fund the NHS to meet the growing need for health services as the population ages. NHS chiefs are now drawing up new proposals that may also include cuts or closure of some local health services. Until the final decisions are known, it's important that we keep campaigning for investment and improvement in local health services, and against any renewed threat to downgrade them.