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NHS Lothian – chaos and confusion.....or worse?

The lies and deceit about the children's ward at St. John's grow by the day. There is clear evidence exposed by Neil Findlay MSP, seemingly the only MSP working for his West Lothian constituents, of NHS Lothian's desire to postpone the report by the Royal College of Paediatrics until after the election. But we are increasingly concerned by the failure of our local constituency MSP's – Angela Constance and Fiona Hyslop – to make any MEANINGFUL statement about the future of this vital part of the hospital.

An election, after all, is the time when local politicians show what they are about! We would ask our two local-not vocal-MSP's to state categorically that the children's ward will remain a 24/7 service for the whole of the life of the next parliament.

This is what "localism" means.

We promised to offer you "Baywatch." This is the number of times that the admissions ward at St. John's mixes men and women to add humiliation to illness. Well, this week it has happened EVERY day! Compare this to the statement made by Mr Crombie in the national press that it had only happened once.

Far from being the exception, NHS Lothian now mixes the sexes on a regular basis. They don't care about the dignity of the sick. All that matters is their desire to meet a target, any target. The patients involved simply do not matter.

But when it comes to targets NHS Lothian just can't deliver. The Royal Infirmary has been shamed as the worst performing hospital in Scotland. Yet this is the hospital that NHS Lothian wants to centralise services to! It can't cope with its own workload so NHS Lothian wants to add more patients from the west.

So it will come as no surprise to you to learn that waiting times are on the increase again, despite NHS Lothian's excessive use of the private sector. Many people have contacted us to say that their operations

have been cancelled at the last minute. They have been asked to turn up at the failing Royal Infirmary at 7am only to be told to go home as their op has been cancelled. Then, miraculously, it is done later at the Murrayfield Hospital, or at the weekend using private doctors and nurses brought in from other parts of the UK.

NHS Lothian can't manage health services. They have squandered millions in the private sector. They have cut their workforce by 10% only to find that they actually need their staff. So then they turn to expensive agency nurses and locum doctors. They have reduced the number of beds by selling off hospitals across the region in order to meet day to day costs, only to find that they can't accommodate patients. These poor souls languish for hours on trolleys across Lothian hospitals or are transported around the country in ambulances that arrive in the middle of the night. Chaos and confusion, and it is us that suffer. Not Mr Crombie. Not Mr Houston. Not any one member of NHS Lothian Board.

Health Boards have no accountability to local people. They can make decisions that affect the lives of thousands. They can spend billions of pounds and yet mismanage finance on a scale which none of us could imagine in our personal lives.

It is time for the government to speak up on behalf of the people. It is time those silent local MSP's spoke up on behalf of their constituents – US. We demand accountability for our NHS. We resent the day to day humiliations that are imposed upon us by fellow Scots who can do bad things to their fellow citizens with impunity.

The election in May is not about independence. It is about the good governance of our country and the public services that touch our daily lives—health and education in particular.

We believe that St. John's Hospital is a vital part of the West Lothian community. Our growing population sees increasing numbers of young people with children and older folk with multiple health needs. Both groups deserve a strong and vibrant local hospital with the full range of services.

None of us deserve NHS Lothian in its current form since its executive team are failing us every day.

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