



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

The Rt. Hon. Andrew Lansley MP  
Secretary of State for Health  
Department of Health  
Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
London SW1A 2NS

**Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee**

County Hall  
New Road  
Oxford OX1 1ND  
Tel: 01865 792422  
Fax: 01865 247805  
DX 4310 OXFORD

My ref:

Your ref:

Date: 28 October 2010

This matter is being dealt with by Roger Edwards	Direct line 01865 810824
	Email: <a href="mailto:roger.edwards@oxfordshire.gov.uk">roger.edwards@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>

Dear Andrew

**Paediatric Cardiac Service at the John Radcliffe Hospital**

On October 14<sup>th</sup> I received an email from **Jeremy Glyde**, Programme Director, Safe and Sustainable Programme, relating to the provision of children's heart surgery services at the John Radcliffe Hospital. In the email Mr Glyde stated that, *"No decision will be made on the future of the service at the John Radcliffe Hospital until a public consultation has been held in 2011 and the outcome of consultation has been considered. The consultation will allow scrutiny committees, local parents, NHS staff and members of the public to have their say on the recommendations"*.

Attached to the email was a copy of a letter from Sir Neil McKay, Chair of the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts (JCPCT), to Sir Jonathan Michael, Chief Executive of the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals Trust. Sir Neil said in his letter that *"the eventual options for reconfiguration [of paediatric cardiac services] that are put out for public consultation in 2011 do not include the children's heart surgery service at the John Radcliffe Hospital"*.

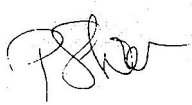
Sir Neil's letter then went on to say that, *"not being included in options for consultation does not mean that the JCPCT has made any decision about the future of the service at the John Radcliffe Hospital"*. It is very difficult to understand that sentiment. If the John Radcliffe is not included in consultation, how could it be possible to come to any decision other than that the unit should close? And how could the decision be subject to consultation if the John Radcliffe is not included in the options?

In my view, this decision removes any chance of the John Radcliffe being able to present its case properly and effectively. Furthermore, the removal of any possibility of meaningful local consultation does not fit with the spirit of health scrutiny regulations or the exercise of local democratic accountability. It is difficult to see how it fits with the principle of shared decision-making and *"no decision about me without me"*.

As far as we are aware, this decision has been taken with no consultation with local people, clinicians, GPs or anybody else with an interest in health matters in Oxfordshire. There has certainly been no consultation with the HOSC over something that is quite obviously a substantial change in service.

I am not sufficiently naïve to expect the JCPCT would now undertake a U-turn and reverse its decision to close the John Radcliffe unit – life is not like that. However, on behalf of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, I would ask that the closure of the John Radcliffe children's heart surgery unit should be included as an option in the public consultation that is due to take place in 2011 so that the people of Oxfordshire can have their say.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Skolar', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Peter Skolar  
Chairman of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Oxfordshire Joint Health OSC comprises councillors from Oxfordshire's County, District and City Councils as well as co-opted members of the public

Copied to all Oxfordshire MPs