

News Release

30 October 2009

Hospital Chief Executive Reassures Community about Maternity Unit

Derek Smith, Chief Executive of the Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has reassured the local community about suggestions that the hospital's maternity unit might close.

“We agree with many of the comments made by local people on Facebook about the vital importance of the maternity unit in Dorchester. There really is no other viable place in the local area where up to 2,500 mothers a year can give birth.

“We do not know who started the rumour that the future of the maternity unit was in doubt but it certainly has not come from our senior team.

“We do face difficult financial challenges in the weeks and months ahead but closing the maternity unit is not a realistic option. We have a responsibility to exercise our functions ‘effectively, efficiently and economically’. Delivering effective maternity services is part of our core function.”

“I have spoken with those parents who have expressed their concern about the alleged closure of the maternity unit and reassured them personally.”

“The public concern about the maternity unit does highlight the danger of rumours spreading during a period of change. We need the support and understanding of all our partners, including the community, in order to ensure that we can develop a good, strong and sensible plan that safeguards our hospital’s long term future - enabling us to deliver quality services whilst also living within our means.”

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