

## **An informed patient's opinion**

The Future fit programme is trying get the best possible medical care for Shropshire and Telford within the constraints of limited money and rising patient demand. The closure of one A and E may well help the hospital situation but will mean more work for hard pressed GPs with inadequate additional funding.

Shropshire's problems are not unique. The NHS is in crisis nationally.

The NHS was the best health system in the world. This is no longer true. The UK lags behind most European Countries in treatment outcomes. The UK is 21<sup>st</sup> out of 25 in breast cancer survival, 20<sup>th</sup> out of 23<sup>rd</sup> for bowel cancer survival, and 19<sup>th</sup> out of 31 in stroke survival. Most Eastern European countries do better than us. These figures come from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The UK has fewer Doctors and Nurses/1000population than Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Czech Republic, and less than half the number of hospital beds/1000population than France or Germany. The OECD reports that staff in UK hospitals are 'rushed and without time to care leaving them focussed on processes rather than patients'

General Practice is in crisis. The workload is immense and will increase if Future Fit proceeds. There is an acute shortage of doctors entering General Practice. Partners cannot be replaced and locums cannot be found. GP numbers have not increased over the last 10 years and 35% are due to retire in the next 5 years

This is all the result of too little money and recent political decision making. The UK population is taxed less than most European countries. More than 90% of hospital trusts are in the red. The country spends less on health care than any other advanced European nation, and over the last decade growth in NHS finance has increased at a slower rate than at any time in its history.

We believe that the majority of our population are unaware of the condition of our health system. It is ridiculous that CCGs and hospital trusts across the country are spending money and time on trying to improve care with inadequate resources. Future fit in our county is a classic example of this.

The country needs a national debate on the NHS before it collapses completely. Should taxes be raised, charges be introduced for certain services, or the NHS disbanded and an insurance based system introduced?