

NHS staff protest

Tuesday 5th December, noon, Manchester

Car cavalcade – Community NHS staff will form a cavalcade of 100 cars decorated with posters and balloons in a procession around Manchester to protest at cuts in Manchester community mental health service.

Occupational therapists, activities staff, senior support workers, team secretaries, day care staff, technical instructors, therapists and over 100 nurses and some users and carers are expected to take part in the event organised by the staff side committee of Manchester mental health and social care trust. This involves UNISON, RCN and AMICUS trade unions.

Cuts include

- massive reductions in community mental health teams
- specifically 33 less nurses, 6.5 less OTs
- much less time to keep people well
- much bigger caseloads as care managers are reduced from
- possible closure of old age assessment day centre in South Manchester
- possible privatisation of 4 specialist community teams
- possible redundancies for experienced nursing staff
- closure of 7 day support for elderly in Central
- downgrading of staff
- this trust already lost 37 clinical posts in March

Manchester has the worst crisis in acute mental health care in the country. So said the BMA last month. To provide a real alternative to hospitalisation, community services in Manchester needs expanding not reduction. But we face new proposals which want to get rid of 33 nurses and 6.5 occupational therapists. Some teams will go from 16 nurses to 4. At the same time they have the money to create 24 extra managers!! Staff are determined to stop these cuts.

“The proposals are being presented as an improvement!! But we would have twice as many patients each, so have half the time to provide care. We are not prepared to see our service destroyed. Not one member of staff supports these proposals.” said one nurse.

Earlier in the year Patricia Hewitt said this was the “best year ever for the NHS”. Not for mental health and not for Manchester. Too many psychiatric beds have been closed over the last few years. Everywhere patients are waiting to be admitted. Even the most acutely ill people who have been sectioned i.e. requiring hospitalisation.

Manchester mental health trust has a £6.9 million historic deficit and an annual “overspend/underfunding” of over £2million. The proposals are driven by the government instruction to trusts to balance their books. Manchester has been consistently under funded.

Cavalcade starts at noon at Showcase cinema car park, Hyde Rd, Gorton. It travels into town and finishes with a drive past trust headquarters in Chorlton

For more information, contact Karen Reissmann, UNISON on 07 977 986 179