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### Hopkins attacks ward closures as NHS funding dries up

Kris Hopkins, the Prospective Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Keighley and Ilkley, has said he fears the Government's economic mis-management of the NHS could lead to further cutbacks at Airedale Hospital.

In recent weeks it has emerged that the hospital's cancer and gynaecological wards are set to close, with the numbers of staff working at peak times in the accident and emergency unit also due to be reduced.

Cllr Hopkins said Chancellor Alistair Darling's recent decision to provide a smaller funding increase for the NHS than in previous years – outlined in his Comprehensive Spending Review statement to MPs – suggests that the fortunes of Airedale Hospital are unlikely to improve in the coming years.

He commented:

“The Labour Government has wasted billions and billions of pounds on the NHS since it came to power in 1997 and now this economic mis-management is manifesting itself in ward closures and service reductions at Airedale Hospital and countless other hospitals across the country.

“Airedale Hospital is one of the jewels in Keighley's crown with a well-deserved reputation for excellence far beyond its boundaries. However, hospital managers are now clearly being backed into a corner as the Government seeks to balance its books after years of waste and neglect in the NHS.

“Gordon Brown arrived in Downing Street with a promise to make the NHS his priority. However, the reckless decisions he took in pouring billions of pounds of taxpayers' money down black holes during his years as Chancellor are now coming back to haunt him and his successor, Alistair Darling. It is a tragedy that should never have happened.”

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