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Hopkins gravely concerned over threat to A&E services

Kris Hopkins, the Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Keighley and Ilkley, has spoken of his grave concern at reports that Accident and Emergency services in the area could be slashed as a result of Government plans to close 92 of England's 204 A&E departments.

Flying in the face of recommendations from clinicians, the Department of Health has reportedly ordered the NHS to redesign Accident and Emergency services so that each major A&E department serves a population of at least 450,000 people – at present, A&Es typically serve an area of less than 250,000. If these plans proceed, the number of A&E departments in Yorkshire and Humber would be cut from 21 to just 11.

Kris Hopkins commented:

“I am appalled at these reports and their potential impact on patients in Keighley and Ilkley.

“The Accident and Emergency Department at Airedale Hospital currently sees and treats 47,000 patients every year, a quite remarkable achievement given the pressures its staff and resources are currently under.

“The idea that the hospital would have to deal with almost double that number is sheer madness and could only lead to a significantly poorer standard of patient care.

“Even worse is the scenario that Airedale Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department will be one of the 10 across the country forced to close under the Government's proposals.

“There is no clinical evidence to justify shutting down A&E departments on the grounds that they don't serve a catchment population in excess of 450,000. Yet, Whitehall bureaucrats are seeking to justify closures on this basis.

“The truth is that these closures are being driven by the need to deal with financial deficits – a problem caused by Gordon Brown who has been in control of NHS budgets.

“These latest Labour cuts to our NHS must be resisted and I intend to do everything I can to ensure that they are.”

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