

LUDLOW NHS Survey Results

It's fair to say that the response rate from Ludlow was disappointing – lower than any of our other local constituencies.

The only candidate to complete the survey was **Dr Julia Buckley (Labour)**.

Just after the survey closed, **Hilary Wendt (Green)** sent her apologies for not responding, noting her very high work load.

We also received an email from **Philip Dunne (Conservative)** to explain that he does not do not respond to surveys before, during or after the General Election period. We did not receive a response from **Heather Kidd (Liberal Democrat)**.

The purpose of the survey was of course to enable a comparison between the survey responses from different candidates. In this instance, Julia's responses will have to stand alone.

We asked candidates:

WILL YOU

1. **Stand up for health care by demanding an end to the continued under-funding of NHS budgets and social care?**

The King's Fund notes that the NHS is enduring the most prolonged funding squeeze in its history; that the government has misrepresented the level of funding for health care; and that the NHS can no longer maintain quality of care and meet performance standards with its current budget.

Julia Buckley responded 'Yes'.

Julia added 'Labour will prioritise funding back into the NHS - £30Bn over the next Parliament, and to ensure as much as possible is directed into frontline services - which have been depleted in order to administer the internal market since 2013.'

2. **Demand no less than the investment called for by NHS Providers in their own manifesto to political parties i.e. an extra £5bn per year NHS funding for the next 3 years, plus £10bn capital, as the minimum required to maintain existing standards and services?**

Julia Buckley responded 'Yes'.

Julia added 'Labour will listen to, and work with, the hard working staff within the NHS who really understand the pressures on the health service, and the real impact of budget cuts, on service delivery.'

3. Campaign with the community in your constituency against any reduction in local access to health services?

Local issues currently include: at least £125 million planned savings a year to NHS spending in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin, the loss of an A&E and acute hospital to save £19 million a year, the likely loss of the Women's and Children's Centre at Telford, £3.8 million cuts to community hospitals (including closure threats to inpatient beds and Minor Injuries Units), planned downgrading or closure of rural Maternity Units to save £980,000 a year, increased rationing of hip and knee replacement surgery, the closure without consultation of two valued mental health services at the end of March, the gathering crisis in GP services and social care, and the pretence that 'resilient communities' can cover for deep cuts in NHS and social care services.

Julia Buckley responded 'Yes'.

Julia added 'YES. I have already been involved locally to lead campaigns in Bridgnorth to retain the Maternity Unit in our Community Hospital, and to protect the A&E at Telford Hospital, with consequent impact for the women and children's unit. As a local Councillor I also raise the profile of these campaigns with the local government circuit, to raise awareness and garner support.'

4. Support improved funding for mental health and learning disability services in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin?

Mental health is supposedly an NHS England priority – yet our local provider SSSFT made in-year savings of £6.7 million last year, with a target of a further £8.7 million savings this year. Staff tell us that the combination of NHS cuts and social care cuts is already having a profoundly damaging impact on service users.

Julia Buckley responded 'Yes'.

Julia added 'YES. Cutting funding to mental health provision at a time when the crisis is increasing is putting lives in misery and storing up problems for the future. We will reverse the cut of 6,600 mental health nurses since 2010.'

5. Campaign for new legislation to reinstate a publicly owned and run NHS, and to end the £4.5 to £10 bn currently spent each year on commissioning, management consultants and private sector profits instead of patient care?

Julia Buckley responded 'Yes'.

Julia added *'I have worked in government for 20 years and can understand the level of bureaucracy and administration that is required to manage the internal market, which this Government created within the NHS from 2013. That £4.5bn per year could have paid for 42,000 GPs or 170,000 nurses. Labour will redirect that funding back into front line services by repealing the "Health & Social Care Act" and so turning the NHS back into a public service, free at the point of access, for all.'*

6. End the 1% cap on NHS pay increases, restore NHS bursaries for nurses and health professionals, and legislate for safe staffing levels in health care?

Julia Buckley responded 'Yes'.

Julia added *'Labour will put pay decisions back into the hands of the independent pay review body and give our NHS workers the pay they deserve. We want to protect patients by ensuring safe staffing levels in the NHS. Labour will introduce funding for all nurses and health related degrees immediately, to enable nurses to study from this September. We need to support our health care workers and end the desperate recruitment crisis in our NHS.'*

We also asked candidates if there was anything else they wished to add.

Julia Buckley commented *'Locally, Shropshire is set to lose up to 2,000 NHS staff and all of our three community hospitals (Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Bishops Castle) are at risk of closure under the Transformational Plan from SaTH. This would leave one of the largest constituencies in England without a single hospital. Our current (Conservative) MP is the Minister for Health and must be held to account for his role in presiding over the cuts which have led to this situation. I urge you to consider the power of your vote. Ask yourself, how do you want the NHS to look in 5 years' time?'*