

SHREWSBURY & ATCHAM NHS Survey Results

We received responses from **Dr Laura Davies (Labour)**, **Edward Higginbottom (UKIP)**, and **Emma Bullard (Green)**¹.

We did not receive responses from **Daniel Kawczynski (Conservative)** or **Hannah Fraser (Lib Dem)**.

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.

All candidates who completed the survey – **Laura Davies**, **Edward Higginbottom** and **Emma Bullard** - responded 'Yes'.

Laura Davies added *'The BMA among others, have repeatedly stated that woeful underfunding by the coalition/Conservatives has contributed to the decrease in service provision.'*

Emma Bullard added *'We spend less than most wealthy nations on healthcare as a percentage of GDP. The Green Party pledges to restore the funding needed for our health service.'*

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?**

All candidates who completed the survey – **Laura Davies**, **Edward Higginbottom** and **Emma Bullard** - responded 'Yes'.

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

¹ Candidates are listed here in the order in which they responded

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.

All candidates who completed the survey – **Laura Davies, Edward Higginbottom** and **Emma Bullard** - responded 'Yes'.

Laura Davies added '*This is very complicated - I want to see a properly funded health service - unfortunately the configuration of services is impossible to speculate on until the financial position is known. Labour will immediately put a moratorium on Emergency Department closures until a proper public consultation and financial review is undertaken. Maternity - in particular obstetric services are very complex, and is one of the few areas where risk is stratified - and provision of small midwife-led units depends on the uptake of that service in a particular area. Again, funding is an issue but not the only issue!*'

Emma Bullard added '*We need A&E services in both Shrewsbury and Telford. We have a growing population in the RSH catchment area and growing numbers of elderly people. Shropshire is underfunded compared to other areas; but we don't want to make this into a zero sum game. There should be proper funding for the NHS as whole.*'

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.

All candidates who completed the survey – **Laura Davies, Edward Higginbottom** and **Emma Bullard** - responded 'Yes'.

Laura Davies added '*mental health problems place a terrible burden on individuals, their families and the wider economy. Labour will give mental health services parity with physical health, through continued investment in infrastructure and facilities.*'

Emma Bullard added '*The Green Party will give mental health parity with physical health - as the government has promised but has not delivered. We*

would ensure people experiencing mental health crises are supported close to their home and support networks. We'd introduce mental health awareness training within the public sector and encourage a more open dialogue on the issue in wider society.'

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?

All candidates who completed the survey – **Laura Davies, Edward Higginbottom** and **Emma Bullard** - responded 'Yes'.

Laura Davies added '*In general - managers are not all bad - the NHS needs good managers to make the service run smoothly, in addition to commissioners to make sure services are appropriately tailored to the local area. I do believe in a publicly owned and run NHS.'*

Emma Bullard added '*We'd introduce an NHS Reinstatement Act to ensure that all health and dental services are always publicly provided and funded, and free at the point of access, Green MP Caroline Lucas has made this a priority since being elected to Parliament in 2010.'*

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?

All candidates who completed the survey – **Laura Davies, Edward Higginbottom** and **Emma Bullard** - responded 'Yes'.

Laura Davies added '*I am an NHS employee and I am sick of real-terms pay cuts year-on-year!'*

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

Laura Davies commented '*I am an NHS doctor, so I have first-hand experience of our NHS and I have never seen it so stretched and under-funded as it is at the moment.'*

Edward Higginbottom commented '*Unless a UKIP government is elected then none of the above are likely to happen.'*

Emma Bullard commented '*We're proud that the National Health Action Party has endorsed three of our candidates, in recognition of our shared aims to protect and champion public services. The Greens have stood down in Jeremy Hunt's constituency and are backing Dr Louise Irvine of the NHA party'*