

## **Moving 350 NHS staff into a Trust-owned private company has put Yeovil hospital in breach of licence, public service union UNISON has set out.**

**7 feb**

In a letter to NHS regulators, UNISON argues the Trust's decisions must be investigated.

Writing to NHS Improvement, UNISON set out Yeovil hospital's failure to comply with the licencing requirement to have due regard for the NHS Constitution. The Constitution, which establishes what NHS patients and staff can expect from the service, states that NHS Trusts must "engage staff in decisions that affect them and the services they provide".

But Yeovil Trust bosses never asked their staff about the decision to set up the subco. In written responses to UNISON, senior managers stated they had no intention to consult any staff. This included the 350 about to be transferred out of the NHS.

This puts Yeovil Hospital in breach of licence because a condition of operation for NHS Trusts is to take "all reasonable precautions" against failing to meet standards. One of these is the need to pay attention to the NHS Constitution. In Yeovil, senior managers failed to explain why they would not abide by the requirement to take staff views into account.

UNISON has requested NHS Improvement investigate Yeovil's error as a matter of urgency. The union is calling for the subco process to be frozen while the investigation goes on.

Helen Eccles, UNISON's Head of Health for the South West, said:

"Hundreds of staff at Yeovil hospital have lost out thanks to the cavalier attitudes of senior management. They have put Yeovil Hospital in breach of licence because they were so desperate to avoid asking staff what they thought of the subco plan. The reason for that is clear – hospital staff know that the subco plan is a mistake and would have said so to their bosses.

"Over one third of staff signed a UNISON petition calling on the Trust to engage with them, as per their responsibility in the Constitution. Sadly Trust bosses dismissed this strength of feeling among their employees, claiming people didn't know what they were signing.

"As a trade unionist who has worked with NHS staff for years, I know that everyone, from estates and facilities to consultants, has an important voice to add. It's a shame Trust bosses have ignored this and are now in breach of their licence."

350 porters, cleaners and catering staff transferred into "Simply Serve" on Thursday (1 February 2018).

<https://nursingnotes.co.uk/hundreds-nhs-staff-forcibly-moved-private-company/>