

Friends group may take legal action against NHS Lothian

Friends of Edington Hospital in North Berwick say they were shocked when NHS Lothian announced on 1 September that no new patients would be admitted from the 13th of the month.

The group is now taking advice and has instructed a human rights lawyer to consider what action against NHS Lothian is appropriate. Their main contention is that there has been no consultation on the decision. Patients will instead be sent to East Lothian Community Hospital in Haddington.

The Friends have instructed Elaine Motion, a partner at Balfour+Manson in Edinburgh and one of the UK's leading human rights and civil liberties lawyers, to look into potential legal action over the decision.

Mrs Motion was the lead solicitor in the landmark case in which the UK Supreme Court ruled that Boris Johnson's shutdown of parliament at the height of the row over Brexit (the prorogation case) was unlawful.

The Friends of the hospital say they are "greatly concerned" at the move, which the NHS has said was made "in the face of unprecedented levels of demand".

Murray Donaldson, Chair of the Friends of the Edington Hospital, said: "The way this has been handled without due process in terms of public consultation has been scandalous.

We are very disappointed with this decision.

There has been a cloud hanging over the hospital for some time and we know that whilst staff will be transferred to Roodlands, it does not take into consideration that North Berwick has become an increasingly attractive place for retirement and, with a growing elderly population, it puts even more pressure on that hospital in the years ahead. Over 5,000 people have signed our petition and that tells you the depth of feeling and outrage at this decision.”