

# Speak Now for Sick Kids!

A campaign agenda for '*Families of Sick Children for Safe Access*' in association with  
The New Children's Hospital Alliance

## Stop St. James's! Fight for a better site!

Join the families of sick children and speak out to save other parents and their children from the stress and trauma of a congested & cramped inner city site. Speak now for sick kids! There is a better alternative!



## The problem:

As we move into the final stages of planning, the government is attempting to follow through with its decision to build the new National Children's Hospital on a cramped and congested inner city site in Dublin. We welcome a national children's hospital that brings all three children's hospitals together but we fear the government is woefully misguided in its choice of site and it is the children and their families who will suffer.

## The solution:

The decision was built on the silence of those who actually need these hospitals - parents are too stressed caring for children who are too young and ill to articulate their needs. Staff are afraid to speak out and ordinary families untouched by childhood illness avoid the issue because they don't want to imagine they will ever have to use it. But we need these voices to 'SPEAK OUT!' and make themselves heard!

## The campaign:

*Speak Now for Sick Kids* aims to bring together those disenfranchised groups of parents, friends and families of sick children who are so directly affected by this mammoth decision. By mobilizing public opinion through the **three simple steps** of speaking out in the media, pressuring the government ahead of the elections through advocacy work, and opposing the planning in the official process, we can change this decision! So let's *Speak Now* and make ourselves heard! There is a better alternative for the sick children of Ireland.

## What you can do:

- Today** Become a Champion for Sick Children and contact us to let us know!
- This Week** Speak to your neighbours, family and friends and ask them to join you as you *Speak Now for Sick Kids*!  
  
Reach out to other local parents and set up a Chapter for your area.
- This Month** Set up a meeting with your local TD and explain to them face to face why this hospital site **MUST** be changed!
- What happens Next**
  - Speak out in local media this September.
  - Join NCHA by sending your own planning objection for October 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - Get ready for planned national protest day in November!

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead



## FACT SHEET

# What's wrong with the James' site?

## • Limited Space

The size of the hospital site should be sufficient to allow for expansion over the lifespan of the hospital, which will be at least 50 to 100 years. The clinical space in Crumlin Hospital increased in size by **75%** over the past 15 years. Texas Children's Hospital was rebuilt *twice* in 20 years and Toronto 'Sick Kids' doubled in size every 10 years. Expansion is part of evolving children's medicine, we have to make space for that.

## • Limited Access

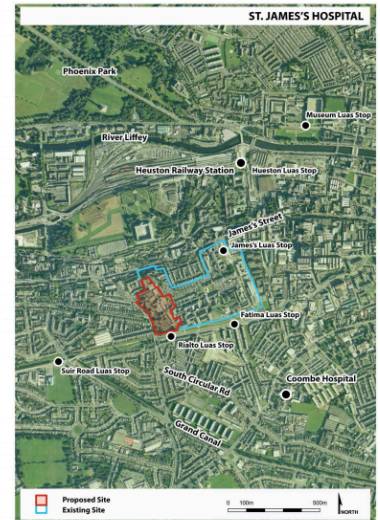
**75%** of children attending hospital for specialist consultant care come from outside the M50. They account for **half of day cases** and **one third of all admissions**. These are the sickest children of all and yet these are the children that will be most inconvenienced if the New Children's Hospital is built in James'. Emergency access is also compromised for children coming by ambulance as the difference of **20 minutes** in traffic can be the difference between life and death.

## • Limited Parking

**90%** of patients travel by car to children's hospitals and there is expected to be over **10,000 visits a day**. Yet only 1.5 parking spaces per bed is being provided! What about both parents? Family? Staff? The estimated average need based on the spaces provided in other international children's hospitals would be **2500 spaces for a 400 bed hospital**. The James's site only has 1000 spaces (with only 675 for parents). Parents and staff in Crumlin and Temple St already know the stress and hassle a lack of adequate parking spaces causes.

## • No Maternity Co-Location

It is inevitable that newborn babies will die each year if the children's hospital is not physically joined to the Maternity. Even a short ambulance drive for vulnerable new-borns increases the mortality rate. Only 4 of 17 Major international Children's Hospitals are physically co located with an Adult Hospital but **10 of 17 Major Children's Hospitals are physically co located with a Maternity Hospital**. This type of co-location directly saves the most lives.



## St James' Site: *The Facts*

473 beds

1000 parking spaces

12 acres

Few relevant adult specialties

Proposed maternity hospital unlikely to be built due to the lack of space or parking.



Connolly Hospital,  
Blanchardstown

## There is a Better Site...

- **The Connolly site: Faster, cheaper, better...**
- 25% cheaper to build on a green field site
- 145 acres available, huge space for expansion.
- Easy access, unlimited parking
- Co-location with the New Rotunda Maternity Hospital being built alongside it.
- Room to develop Education & Research and adult specialties with the Connolly & Rotunda.
- No delay in decanting, no obstacles facing planning, faster to build on a green field site!
- Located on the M50, accessible to both Dublin and rural families national children, a truly *National Children's Hospital* that meets the world standards!
- Potential to become Ireland's first Children's and Adult Level One Trauma Center (international model of care that Ireland sorely needs.)

## 1. 'Speak Now' Advocacy

# Speak now for sick kids!

Patrick Lyden, a prominent lobbyist on Capitol Hill, Washington DC, recommends that the simplest, yet most effective way to get a TD on side is to bring ten of their constituents to their office to say, "you represent us in this and this is what we want." The TD is bound to represent his/her constituency. If not, the issue itself might become an election issue.

Thus we are asking parents to ask their neighbours, family and friends and other sick families to do the same.



*"Parents of sick children need to make their voices heard"*

### **Face to Face lobbying**

We are asking the parents who have been touched by childhood illness to meet face to face with your local representative and explain in person why you attend the hospital, why a 100-200 acre green field site that is accessible is important to you and why you need them to represent you and your family. If you feel comfortable bring your child and have them explain the issues they face in their own words. Face to face lobbying is important because it creates a very human realization of the struggles families with sick children face. It makes the problem clearer for the politicians and harder for them to ignore.

### **How to organise meeting**

Simply call your local TD and councillor and ask them to meet you in person in their home constituency office or office in Dublin, whichever is more convenient. Meetings need only be 15 minutes, make your position clear and ask them to represent your needs. If enough local constituents approach their local politician they are duty bound to represent you at a higher level. If not it could become an election issue.

### **Other modes of contact**

Alternatively, if a face-to-face meeting is not an option you can call/e-mail although these are less effective.

### **Organise "Chapters" through parents' spokespersons:**

Through the 'Chapter Model' we plan to set up chapters, lead by spokespersons for families in the North, South, East and West of Ireland.

### **Timetable for Organising:**

1. Reach out to other families of sick children and ask them to join you in the 'Speak Now' campaign.
2. Bring three volunteers together and discuss becoming a chapter.
3. Contact the NCHA and they will guide you through planning/media and advocacy work step by step
4. Branding: it is important you have your own identity as a group. ie. 'Rural Parents for Safe Access'.
5. Provide members with leaflets and fact sheets. Create a Facebook group to keep them updated.
6. Speak out in local and then national media about your story.
7. Begin face-to-face lobbying campaign with your members all meeting with local politicians individually.
8. Send an opposition submission letter to planning.
9. Attend the lobbying day

### **Speak now for Sick Kids' Lobbying Day:**

After our initial lobbying attempts in September and October we are planning a possible national event to bring all our chapters together for a press conference in Dublin to lobby the government to make a change.

Want some advice on lobbying? Please call us on [0838440463](tel:0838440463) or e-mail our community organizer at [nchalliance@gmail.com](mailto:nchalliance@gmail.com)

## 2. Objecting to Planning

### Taking part in the planning process:

Your voice is important and this is one of the most important ways to make it heard!

The deadline is *Friday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October*. Here's what you need to know...

#### Making a Submission to An Bord Pleanala:

Any of the parents/relatives who wish to do so may send a submission to An Bord Pleanala commenting on the proposed National Children's Hospital at the St. James's Hospital Campus.

Only planning related matters may be addressed in your submission. In this instance issues might include:

- **Transport** - whether the site is readily accessible for the 10,000 estimated arrivals and departures per day. The figure of 10,000 arrivals and departures is an estimate of patient, visitor and staff numbers only and does not include the daily requirement for services, deliveries etc.
- **Parking** - whether there is adequate parking for patients and visitors. Fewer than half the number of parking spaces are being provided (per bedspace) at the St. James's Hospital Campus for the National Children's Hospital than at Alder Hey, the new Children's Hospital in Liverpool.
- **Scale** - whether you consider the building to be an appropriate size for its context.
- **Maternity hospital** - whether you think the St. James Hospital Campus is large enough to accommodate a new maternity hospital physical linked to the new National Children's Hospital, as well as the existing adult hospital. (The NCHA believes this will be impossible to fit on such a small site)
- **Space for Expansion** - whether you think there is enough space on the site for the future expansion of the National Children's Hospital, the future Maternity Hospital and the existing St James's Adult Hospital.
- **Effect on the human being** - how this hospital will impact the patients attending it. You can discuss emotional stresses or medical and physical dangers it poses.
- **Alternative Sites** - the application includes proposals for Satellite Centres for the National Children's Hospital on the James Connolly Memorial Hospital site and at the Tallaght Hospital site. If you consider that either one of these much larger sites would better accommodate the National Children's Hospital you could make that point.

**Your submission should quote the An Bord Pleanala Reference Number: PL29N.PA0043.**

This submission is simply a letter outlining your opinion on the above facts in your own words (see Fact Sheet for data) but its impact is very important. There is a fee of €50 to submit it. But if enough people submit opposition An Bord Pleanala will have to host an oral hearing in which we can articulate our views in person and force ABP to listen to the arguments of the people directly affected by the hospital as well as allowing the experts the opportunity to dissect the James' plan.

(We understand that parents of sick children are very busy so if you need a template just to sign then e-mail us at [nchalliance@gmail.com](mailto:nchalliance@gmail.com) and we will send you a copy!)



### Tips from the expert:

- Any member of the public who wishes to make a submission in relation to the Children's Hospital in their own right are entirely free to do so
- Public participation in the process is open to everyone irrespective of where they live or who they are.
- In order to make a submission they will need to write a letter addressed to The Secretary; on the letter they must be sure to state their own name and address.
- The submission must be with An Bord Pleanala by 5.30pm on Friday 2nd October - An Bord Pleanala are very strict on this deadline and won't accept submissions received after this time.
- The submission must be accompanied by a fee of €50. They accept cash, cheque, card and I think bank draft and postal order.

The appeal should be sent/handed in to:

*The Secretary*

*An Bord Pleanala*

*64 Marlborough Street*

*Dublin 1*

For guidelines for public participation in strategic infrastructure applications please visit:

<http://www.pleanala.ie/sid/sidpp.htm>

### 3. Speaking to the Media

## How to make your voice heard....

#### Where we stand:

Speaking out in the media can be difficult but a powerful story holds a lot of power. While the public won't always react to statistics and facts, a human story can change the wave of public opinion and bring widespread understanding and support to a complex or tiresome issue. We have brilliant spokespersons, including our representatives Jonathan, Fin and Roisin, but they need to be joined by new, diverse and original voices of those families affected directly by this new hospital plan. Here's how you can help.

#### Advice for making your voice heard in the media:

Contact the media outlet by simply e-mailing or even better, calling, and explain who you are and what your message is. Be able to summarise your goals within NCHA in 10-15 seconds.

ie. "Hi I'm (insert name), a parent representing the Speak now for Sick Kids campaign and I'm campaigning for a better site for the New Children's hospital with more space, better access and maternity co-location. We believe that in changing the James' site and choosing the alternative site of Connolly instead we can ultimately save a lot of lives and give Ireland's sick children the care they deserve for decades to come."

Interviews in which you articulate your experience and explain your message are the best but if you have a news story related to the cause or an opinion on new events to explain, let them know!

#### Advice for interviewees:

- Just a word of advice- prepare three points you want to get across and then stay on message.
- Phrase those points in the most concise and memorable way you can- use buzzwords or prepare to-the-point phrases.
- Feel free to add a personal perspective but don't forget to add in the facts to prove you're well researched in the issue.



## Your Media Contacts:

Irish Independent: [contact@independent.ie](mailto:contact@independent.ie)

01 705 5801

Irish Times: [features@irishtimes.com](mailto:features@irishtimes.com)

01 675 8000

Irish Examiner [news@examiner.ie](mailto:news@examiner.ie)

021 4802348

The Herald [hnews@independent.ie](mailto:hnews@independent.ie)

01 705 5333

Newstalk [info@newstalk.com](mailto:info@newstalk.com)

01 644 5100

RTE [info@rte.ie](mailto:info@rte.ie)

01 208 3434

Today FM [live@todayfm.com](mailto:live@todayfm.com)

1850 715100

*Don't forget your Local Newspaper & Radio station too!*