I have worked for Glenfield hospital as a physiotherapist for over ten years; as a member staff of UHL I have wholly supported the current and previous consultations that have taken place to keep the congenital heart centre open. However, in March this year my life and my family's life changed forever with an unexpected congenital heart problem diagnosis for my daughter Scarlett, who is seven years old and the eldest of my three daughters. I suddenly became not just an employee of the trust but a parent who needed advice, information and support in order to come to terms with and to deal with this unexpected news. I also relied heavily upon this support for my daughter too; who was so very accepting of being tested, questioned and shuttled back and forth to the hospital on numerous occasions. There is nothing more terrifying than having to face your child's mortality. Undoubtedly, what got my family through the following few weeks, after the diagnosis, was the dedication of so many of the staff. This includes Dr Bullock who delivered the unexpected news, Sharon who let me cry on many occasion through sheer shock and fear and also Louise the play specialist who won my daughter's confidence whilst waiting for her CT scan on the ward. Finally, Dr Velasco Sanchez who treated Scarlett on April 28th 2017. Nothing was too much and I was never turned away however many times I asked the same questions. A parent's instinct is to protect their child, but when you can't you have to rely on professionals who can do this in your place, to the best of their knowledge and ability. Over such a short period of time Scarlett has built her confidence and trust in the team at Glenfield, which has helped her through a very difficult time, especially for a seven year old. If you choose to close Glenfield you are asking all these children and parents to start the trust and rapport process all over again at a new hospital. Those hospitals, I am sure, would provide a good service and we would get to know them but they are already busy places and I feel concerned whether they would be able to accommodate the Glenfield cases and also provide the time and personal touch that Glenfield has. We live an hour from Glenfield and, like many parents, would incur a significantly increased journey time; which you are suggesting would be minimal. Please take time to reflect that these children need to maintain as much of a normal life as possible. For Scarlett that means attending school, amongst other things. She has already missed a significant amount of school and by closing Glenfield you would negatively impact so many children's education by needing to take them out for prolonged journey and appointment times. I never wanted to be in this position; at seven years old I didn't expect my eldest child to be diagnosed with a heart condition. I urge you to take a moment to think how you would feel if this were your loved one. You would want to remain in the care of the team in which your loved one had begun their journey. The place where a team of professionals go above and beyond for each and every child. Unfortunately my daughter's condition will need life-long monitoring and she will require further procedures. Surely you can see that it is better to support this well established, service in an area of the country that requires it, which covers the east of England as opposed to fracturing and casting off the families to unfamiliar territory?

Thank you for reading.

Olivia Revitt – Physiotherapist

For information:- My daughter was diagnosed with a congential heart problem this March at 7 years old