

Citation for the 'Freedom of the Borough' award to Michael Mansfield QC

In April 2019 the Secretary of State for Health announced that the Government and NHS England were withdrawing their support for the Shaping a Healthier Future (SaHF) programme, which meant that the closure plans for Charing Cross Hospital and Ealing Hospital, first proposed in 2012, were finally dropped. This announcement marked a major victory in a long running campaign in Hammersmith & Fulham to fight the closure plans. A key part of that campaign was the work done by the Independent Healthcare Commission for North West London, which was launched in December 2014 and published its report in December 2015, exposing the deep flaws in the SaHF programme.

As Chair of the Independent Healthcare Commission, Michael Mansfield QC was the central figure in the demolition of the Government's case for the closure of two major hospitals in West London and is owed a debt of gratitude for the sterling work he put in to deliver the Commission's excellent report. Michael Mansfield's legal and analytical expertise, his status, his gravitas and his personal commitment to human rights was key to defeating the Shaping a Healthier Future proposals. He described the Government's announcement that it was ditching the closure plans as "a perfect example of the power of the people over the people in power".

The Independent Healthcare Commission was the channel through which the people exercised their power, with submissions of written evidence and via public hearings. As Chair of the Commission, Michael Mansfield managed those hearings with skill, expertise and compassion. He made sure that the voice of the people was heard in all five boroughs that were sponsoring the Commission's work. He did so whilst he was also representing families involved in the Hillsborough Inquiry, travelling to London for Commission hearings at the weekends and to Warrington for the Hillsborough Inquiry through the week.

Michael Mansfield has represented defendants in criminal trials, appeals and inquiries in some of the most controversial legal cases the country has seen, including the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six. He represented the family of Jean Charles de Menezes and the families of victims at the Bloody Sunday Inquiry. He chaired an inquiry into the shoot to kill policy in the North of Ireland and has represented many families at inquests, including the Marchioness disaster (which was held at Hammersmith Town Hall) and the Lockerbie bombing. He also represents the family of Stephen Lawrence. He was recently described by the Legal 500 as the 'king of human rights work'.

The benefits of Michael Mansfield's work, as Chair of the Independent Healthcare Commission for North West London, will be felt for years to come by current residents and future generations. The closure of two hospitals has been averted and a national government policy, that would have had such a negative impact on the healthcare of Hammersmith & Fulham residents, has been overturned.

In recognition of these achievements, it is recommended that Mr Michael Mansfield QC be bestowed the honour of the Freedom of the Borough.