Kate Davies, OBE

Director of Health & Justice Services Commissioning

NHS England,

PO Box 16738,

Redditch, B97 9PT

October 8th 2018

Dear Ms Davies,

I am writing to raise concerns about the collaboration between the prison service, IRCs and ambulance services, in relation to emergency care and safeguarding.

Our principle concern is about the time taken for ambulance crew to obtain access to patients inside prisons and IRCs, when they are identified as being ARP Category 1 or 2 by Emergency Operations Centres.

Paramedics have often told us that although their response to Cat 1 calls is immediate and should achieve their 7 minute target, that in practice they are often delayed at prison or IRC gates, and that the actual time to get to the patient can be much longer, creating a risk to life of the detained person.

We have asked the LAS for data on total times to reach patients in prisons and IRCs, but they do not hold this data and can only produce data on single responses that are classified as serious incidents or where there is a complaint being investigated. They tell us that the LAS has no jurisdiction once at the boundary of the prison or IRC and then they must adhere to local rules and regulations.

Perhaps you have access to data on the arrival times of ambulances at prison and IRC gates until patient contact for ambulances for Cat 1 and Cat 2 calls that you can share with us? In relation to serious incidents and PFD notices when there has been a delay in the ambulance crew making patient contact causing death or serious harm, can you share with the Forum details of these SIs and PFD notices?

We are also concerned about the issue of safeguarding when an LAS crew has concerns about the safety of a prisoner or someone detained in an IRC. The LAS has told us that:

 “Local Authorities receive all safeguarding concerns raised and triage accordingly and pass to the relevant agencies to engage. Prisons are different as the Local Authorities do not have jurisdiction over them - safeguarding concerns are dealt with in house”

Clearly, the point of safeguarding is to enable an independent local body to assess the level of harm or potential harm and to take appropriate action. I cannot see how this is possible if safeguarding is dealt with in-house.

As the commissioner for healthcare in prison and IRC sectors, you will share our concern that people who are detained in these establishments have the right to receive care and treatment in a way that is equal to all other people in the UK. This right to equality of access and treatment is built into the fabric of law and rights by the NHS constitution and the Human Rights Act. We would therefore very much like to discuss with you how we can ensure that people who are detained in prisons or IRCs receive equal access to emergency care and effective safeguarding.

Could I also invite you to attend a public meeting of the Patients’ Forum for the LAS to discuss these issues?

I look forward to receiving your reply and I hope we can meet soon for discussion and resolution of these extremely serious matters.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Alexander

Chair

Patients’ Forum for the LAS

07817505193

WWW.Patientsforumlas.net

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[The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP](https://apc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpeople%2Fsajid-javid&data=02%7C01%7C%7C8275fb995487409e87ca08d646308e59%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636773572755970540&sdata=GpG8%2FlLEqi4IVhgyQk%2BCiZOO6UjnoheGmSzfKjCHLag%3D&reserved=0), Home Secretary, 2 Marsham Street, SW1P 4DF

Diane Abbott MP, Shadow Home Secretary, House of Commons

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