

PATIENTS' FORUM

FOR THE LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE

Minutes of the Meeting held at
Westminster PCT (NHS North West London) offices
Monday 12th March 2012
5.30pm-7.30pm

Attendance : Forum Members

Alan Wheatley (Camden)
Alhajie Alhussaine (Lambeth LINK/LAS)
Angela Cross-Durrant (Healthwatch Kingston)
Barry Silverman (Southwark LINK)
C. Gustaffe (Southwark)
Clarissa Rocke-Caton (Hackney LINK)
Dr Joseph Healy (Forum Chair/Southwark)
G. Bertrand (Newham LINK/Forum member)
Gary Orriss (Wandsworth)
Harbhajan Singh (Bexley LINK)
Inez Taylor (Southwark)
Janet Marriott (Richmond/Hounslow LINK)
John Bell (Bexley LINK)
Kathy West (Southwark)
Kay Winn-Cannon (Waltham Forest LINK)
Lynne Strother (Forum Vice Chair and Richmond LINK)
M. Alexander (Forum Vice Chair and Hackney LINK)
Mark Mitten (Lewisham)
Natalie Teich (Islington LINK)
Robin Kenworthy (Kent LINK)
Sister Josephine (Croydon)
Vishi Harihara (Camden/Barnet LINKs)

Attendance : LAS and Commissioning

Jenny Round (LAS - Communications)
Lynn Sugg (LAS Olympic Planning)
Neil Kennett-Brown
Judith Hunt
Helen Shepherd

Apologies

Alison Buick - Wandsworth
Anthony John - Tower Hamlets
Arthur Brill – Camden LINK
Carl Curtis - Southwark

Florence Odeke - Lambeth
George Shaw - Barnet
John Larkin - Barnet - Company Secretary
Louisa Roberts - Tower Hamlets
Margaret Vander, PPI Manager, LAS
Maria Nash – Barnet LINK
Michael English - Lambeth LINK
Pat Duke - Southwark
Rashid Leher – Kingston LINK
Robin Standing - Enfield
Seton During – Enfield LINK

BSL Interpreters

Michelle Wood (BSL Interpreter)
Rob Troy (BSL Interpreter)

We regret to announce that Mike McConnell – Croydon – May Day Hospital Patients' Assembly has resigned as a member of the Forum.

3) Welcome

JH thanked Neil Kennett Brown for providing a temporary meeting place for the Forum at the offices of Westminster PCT and a hearing loop. He also promised to pursue the lack of a hearing loop at the LAS HQ as he has been doing for the past 18 months. He apologised for the late dispatch of Forum papers due to computer technical problems and resolved to work with others to find a solution for the future.

4) Minutes

Omissions: Helen Shepherd (NW London Commissioners) was left out from previous minutes.

5) Matters Arising

- JH raised the problem of shared responsibility for future control of the LAS in view of the London Assembly's ambition to have a much larger role in its operation. Neil Kennett-Brown (NW London commissioners) gave a brief outline of the discussions between the LAS, London Assembly, and the police and fire services about this. He emphasised the point that the LAS wanted to remain separate from the other groups and as part of the NHS so that it can maintain its undistracted focus on health care, but was willing to work with other groups to achieve a more co-ordinated approach.
- Neil welcomed overall the Assembly report, including its comments on the proposed LAS foundation trust and its governance – he will be issuing a formal response. He emphasised the need to avoid packing the LAS Board with members from the London Assembly and instead to get maximum involvement from other groups.

6) Chair's Reports

- A copy of the letter sent by the Chair to the Chair of the LAS complaining about the diminishing interest of its Board in public involvement was discussed. Members complained of the lack of time given over to discussion

of public concerns at Trust Board meetings and a reduced emphasis on public involvement at when key decisions are made. In response Richard Hunt, the Chair of LAS, proposed a meeting with forum members to iron this out. JH, MA, Sister Josephine and Lynne Strother to attend the meeting.

7) Emergency Care at the Olympics

Lynn Sugg presented to the Forum. Her slides will be distributed to the Forum members. In response to questions from Forum members Lyn Sugg (LAS Olympic Games Planning Office) made the following points:

- 1. LAS Managers and the GLA will take steps to ensure that LAS emergency ambulances continue to achieve their target for patients who require emergency care.
- 2. LOCOS will have medical centres in different parts of London to deal with problems and team doctors from many countries will be issued with temporary licenses by the GMC to practice during the Olympics.
- 3. Language training - additional aids in foreign language communications will be issued to ambulance staff including the use of Language line.
- 4. Olympic route network - Anyone can use this but there will also be an alternative route network for participants and emergency services.

8) LAS Committee Reports

- The next Category C Experience group will meet on April 13th.
- Barry Silverman (BS) - Clinical Quality, Safety & Effectiveness report. In answer to MA's question it was stated that calls about suicidal patients' would be responded to by sending an ambulance even when the request is withdrawn.
- BS reported that 25% of complaints against ambulance staff were about abusive attitudes with 180 complaints registered (for the last year). BS suggested the Forum find out at what point in the 12 hour shift abusive behaviour is most likely to take place.
- BS said that a protocol is being worked to determine who should be responsible for declarations of death of patients in the care of paramedics. Normally GPs are responsible.
- MA reported that a Rule 43 Coroner's recommendation regarding a man who died in police custody was being implemented, but MAS was concerned that the family was being excluded from information about the action taken by the LAS to prevent further deaths.
- In relation to the care of patients with mental health problems, MA expressed concern that in some cases patients were transferred by private companies in cage vehicles. He urged that more care and consideration be given to patients with mental health problems.
- Kathy West reported that there is a protocol on how to handle intoxicated people at non-emergency department locations.
- Fiona Moore, Medical Director of the LAS, has invited forum members to contribute to a protocol on how to manage people who are in pain. KW for the Clinical Audit and Research Steering Group to participate. **ACTION: KW**

9) Governance and the LAS Board

- BS asked what speaking rights Governors will have when the LAS achieves Foundation status. **Action: MA to request information.**

10) Patient Safety in UK Ambulances Project

- Matthew Cook has invited the Forum to participate in this project re: the state of ambulances. One of their team (Mike Smyth, who is a Clinical Instructor with West Midlands Ambulance Service) will be invited to address a meeting of the LAS patients' forum.
- http://www.netscc.ac.uk/hsdr/files/project/SDO_PRO_10-1008-12_V02.pdf

11) Target Performance and Turnaround time.

- BS raised concerns about the introduction of the 111 system affecting ambulance responses by delaying responses to life threatening emergencies. Forum reps will raise this issue at the next LAS Board meeting.
- Neil (Commissioner) promised to bring statistics on target performance and turnaround times to the next LAS Patients' Forum meeting.
- Noted that there had been delays of up to 2 weeks in hospitals supplying ambulance turnaround time delays of over 1 hour to commissioning. It is hoped that the problem will be resolved by the recent installation of an automatic hospital alert system.

12) IT and Communications

- Command Point IT system. Noted unacceptable crash of new system with 150 issues due to faulty/unwritten software. No penalty clauses for delays. There was a system failure last year with a report at Board level of two serious incidents and some patients had to wait longer for emergency care-it is believed that one patient died as a result. . A question was raised about whether delays in implementation of the system would incur additional costs for the LAS. BS asked whether a service management report is publically available for scrutiny. Recent live tests of the system have proved more successful though some calls still have to be taken manually. The next live test due on 29/03/12. Forum members to attend LAS board meeting on 29/5/12 to discuss these problems and any others that may occur when Command Point is fully tested.

13) Any other business

- BS produced a document from the Runnymede Trust on the recruitment of ethnic minority staff. KW to look at this and see how this might enhance LAS recruitment procedures.
- JH reported that we now have a fully functioning website where meeting documents are publically available to view (www.patientsforumlas.net)
- JH urged people to send in reports in plenty of time so that they can be sent out prior to Forum meetings. Documents will be printed and distributed if the problems with excel have not been solved.

14) Date of Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be on Monday 16th April and will be held at the London Ambulance Centre, 220 Waterloo Road, SE1 8SD.