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The Editor
South London Press

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Dear Editor,

Consultation on the Re-development of King's Emergency Department

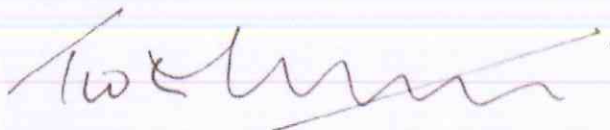
I am writing in response to your article entitled "Betrayed" that appeared in last week's South London Press. I am concerned that readers might have got the impression from the article that we have not proposed private and secure areas for mental health patients in the plans that are currently out for consultation. In fact the plans include 17 separate areas that will give patients both privacy and security. We currently see 350 patients a day, on average 8 of these are mental health patients, and of those 5 will come into the Emergency Department by ambulance and are treated in resus or majors.

The majority of mental health patients attending the department have physical problems that need treating alongside their mental health problem. Our proposals incorporate new safe and private areas in each of the Department's main areas – majors, minors, resus, paediatrics and the clinical decision unit (observation ward). In this way, mental health patients will receive the most appropriate care tailored to their individual needs in an environment that affords them privacy and where they can feel safe.

Other aspects of the proposals currently out for consultation include the relocation of Psychiatric Liaison staff within the ED so that mental health patients can get faster access to specialist care, and the movement of the walk in entrance away from busy and noisy Denmark Hill.

In partnership with Southwark and Lambeth PCTs and the South London and Maudsley NHS FT, we have already held an extensive engagement and pre-consultation and engagement programme. Over 100 patients, mental health service users, patient groups and staff have already been involved in discussing the options for re-designing King's ED that have resulted in the proposals that are now out for consultation. Until April 10th we are inviting comments and suggestions to help us understand what people really think about the plans so we can change them if necessary and ensure we are meeting their needs. I would urge readers of the SLP to check out the websites of the PCTs, SLAM or King's, where they will find the detailed consultation documentation and the opportunity to have their say about what they really want from the Emergency Department.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Smart
Chief Executive
King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust