

MPs views

All the MPs have expressed their concern that, with the closure of the SLAM Emergency Clinic, the needs of local mental health patients will not be adequately met.

Harriet Harman has a long history of involvement with local mental health groups. She recently wrote a column in Southwark News where she urged people to respond to the consultation, reminded her constituents that she was against the closure of the EC and expressed her concern that there was no "safe and segregated" area for mental health patients within the plans for the new Emergency Department. "Cubicles dotted around the main A & E and no separate reception areas is not safe and segregated."

Kate Hoey recently tabled a parliamentary question about the ED.

"To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when the new designated space at King's College Hospital for the former emergency clinic of Maudsley Hospital will be completed." Michael Parker wrote in response to this focusing on the issues below.

Tessa Jowell has been reported as saying she is "surprised" at the omission of a separate area for mental health service users and that she hopes the consultation will address this "omission". Her office have stressed to us that she will be coming to the meeting with an open mind and wants to hear about how the plans address the needs of mental health patients.

Key issues and messages

In our responses to questions about the consultation proposals to date, we have found the following messages most helpful :

1. King's Emergency Department currently sees around 350 patients a day. Of these, eight are mental health patients, and five of those will arrive at the ED by ambulance and be treated in resuscitation or majors. This means on average, the ED sees three walk-in mental health patients a day.
2. The vast majority of mental health patients presenting at the ED are in need of physical treatment as well as mental health services. They may need to be seen in minors, majors, resuscitation or paediatrics, as well as requiring a quiet, safe and private room where they can be assessed and treated.
3. During pre-consultation some mental health service users expressed concern at being stigmatised by having a separate entrance to the ED.
4. Our plans establish quiet, private rooms across different clinical departments of the ED. This will mean that wherever mental health patients are seen, the right facilities and clinical services will be there for them.
5. It is also proposed that there will be a new meet and greet system. A senior nurse will swiftly assess and direct patients to appropriate areas within the ED. By cutting out the need to queue for registration and then for triage, all patients will be able to be seen much more quickly in appropriate clinical settings.
6. The Psychiatric Liaison Team will also now be based in the ED for quick access to patients presenting with mental health crisis and will continue to be available for 24hrs.
7. These proposals build on an extensive engagement and pre-consultation programme earlier this year developed in partnership with King's College Hospital, SLAM and both

Lambeth and Southwark PCTs. Over 100 people including service users, carers and staff took part.

8. All of these improvements will improve the service for mental health patients, whilst at the same time bringing benefits to everyone who uses King's Emergency Department.