AMBULANCE QUEUES AT LONDON A&Es

Meeting with Amanda Coyle, Tom Coffey and Garret Emmerson on December 8th 2017 at City Hall

**Amanda Coyle** - Director of Health and Communities, Greater London Authority

**Dr Tom Coffey** – GP, Urgent Care Clinical Lead to NHSE and London Mayor’s

office and Clinical Assistant at Charing Cross Hospital.

**Garrett Emmerson** - Chief Executive of the London Ambulance Service

**Joseph Healy**, President of the Patients’ Forum for the LAS

**Malcolm Alexander**, Chair of the Patients’ Forum.

The Forum has written to Sidiq Khan on two occasions – June 10th 2016 and August 21st 2017. In his first response of July 1st 2017 the Mayor told the Forum that

The second response informed the Forum that th Mayor had commissioned the King's Fund to write a report for him on the five STPs in London. The King's Fund has partnered with the Nuffield Trust on this and expect to publish their report very soon. What they say will guide how the Mayor engages with the NHS on these important issues.

As there appeared to be little progress in the Mayor exercising his influence in the matter of delayed ambulance handovers to hospital A&E and the problem paramedics being tied up in queues and unable to respond to patients, the Forum requested a meeting with the Mayor which was refused. However, with the support of Caroline Pidgeon the London Assembly member for Southwark, a meeting was agreed to jointly with the Forum and the LAS.

The Forum provided the following documents for the meeting which are attached:

1. Briefing for Mayor, Assembly and GLA
2. 4 pages of breach data from August 2017 out of a breach pack of 47 pages

(breach: wheel-stop to clinical handover at A&E taking >than30 minutes).

1. Article from Evening Standard about the handover delays of over an hour.
2. List of mental health handover breaches.

We explained our concerns about the impact of ambulance queuing:

1. We discussed the:

* Mayor’s powers in relation to the NHS as a result of devolution, the enabling powers and his work with the London region of NHS England and with PHE (Yvonne Doyle).
* King’s Fund’s work on STPs commissioned by the Mayor and their finding in relation to inadequate resourcing of STP plans, a large focus on bed reduction and a lack of evidence base for the STP plans and proposals. Tom said that the STPs financial assumptions were shown by the Kings Fund to lack credibility.
* Failure of the STP to consider the expected 6.5% increase in the population of London over the next 10 years creating a need for an extra 1500 beds.
* Additional work will be carried out by the King’s Fund on STP projections in the coming months – especially in relation to bed capacity.
* The report of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine: “Tacking Emergency Department Crowding”

[www.rcem.ac.uk/docs/College%20Guidelines/5z23.%20ED%20crowding%20overview%20and%20toolkit%20(Dec%202015).pdf](http://www.rcem.ac.uk/docs/College%20Guidelines/5z23.%20ED%20crowding%20overview%20and%20toolkit%20(Dec%202015).pdf)

* Significant part played by delayed discharge in creating ambulance queues.

1. Tom Coffey said that reducing the number of A&E departments was not a significant problem if the number of beds was maintained at the same level or increased to meeting the needs of patients.
2. Bed projections need to be based on population growth and morbidity factors.
3. Meeting are taking place with Professor Jane Cummings is the Chief Nursing Officer for England and Executive Director at NHS England and with Simon the Chief Executive of NHSE.
4. Tom said that data was needed to show the extent to which ambulance queues at each hospital have increased decreased over the past five years. Garrett confirmed that the LAS held this information. He also said that a tremendous amount of work is going on now to mitigate the effects of queuing on patients waiting for admission to A&E and patients waiting for an ambulance. He said that some hospital were better than others and that some hospitals have made great improvements, e.g. Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich.
5. We are taking place at a senior level to attempt resolution of the ambulance queuing problem, e.g. Garrett met with Simon Steven on December 1st and Tom Coffey is meeting with Simon Stevens on the afternoon of December 8th. Keith Willett has also produced a letter on the queuing problem.
6. Garrett produced data based on a comparison of ambulance queues in November 2016 and 2017 which showed improvement in many hospitals but that several continued to have increased queuing problems. We pointed out that over a five year period that the queuing problem had got worse in some hospitals and better in others, but that the problem was fluid because many factors could influence the development of ambulance queues. We agreed that every time a patient waits over 30 minutes – it is a system failure.
7. We agreed to look at potentially useful sources of information of a more qualitative nature, that the Forum might be able to collect, e.g. in relation to the experiences of patients held in queues outside A&Es. We need a patient focussed data set.
8. Regarding mental health care we presented data on extended handover waits specifically in mental health units. Tom said that the number of places of safety were being decreased from 21 down to 6 in order to provide a specialist service (reflecting stroke and cardiac units). Tom agreed to invite the Forum to participate in the analysis of the next data set about the state of urgent and emergency care in London and the consequence of ambulance delays.
9. In relation to the inconsistencies in urgent care across London, Tom said that this problem was being fixed and the concerns of patients and professionals listened to.
10. Garret said that the queuing problems in the worst hospital needs to be prioritised.
11. Questions are being put to the Assembly next week on the problem of access of emergency care services.
12. Amanda agreed that the Forum could hold a meeting on these issues at City Hall.

End