

DRAFT MEETING NOTE

**MEETING WITH HEATHER LAWRENCE – LAS CHAIR**

MAY 23RD 2017

Kathy West and Malcolm Alexander – Patients Forum for the LAS

1. **LAS Academy** – we shared the Forum’s draft report on the Academy and described the positive collaboration between Forum members and the Academy. We expressed concern that there appeared to be a lack of diversity in the current Academy applicants that we have observed, despite the allocation of £500,000 from the Health Education Authority to the LAS to improve diversity of the LAS workforce. The first meeting of the new Equality and Diversity Committee is to be held on May 24th and we will raise this issue at the meeting and with Melissa Berry.

Action: Request diversity data on applicants and successful candidates from the Academy.

**2) LAS Director of HR** – the new Director will start in early June (Patricia Grealish, Director of People and OD She will be responsible for recruitment, diversity and the long term HR strategy.

**3) New Strategies –** Fleet Strategy was presented to the May Board meeting and the Estate Strategy is being prepared which will present the LAS plan for reconfiguration of its 72 ambulance stations.

**4) Ambulance Preparation Staff –** Noted that information has been provided to the Forum suggesting that these contracted staff are paid less than the minimum wage.Heather raised this issue at the May LAS Board meeting and a response is awaited.

**5) Quality Account –** we discussed the importance of the Quality Account being a living document and for plans and recommendations to become part of an active process of engagement and implementation. The Forum will discuss this approach with Trisha Bain on June 2nd.

**6) Command and Control Culture –** KW raised concerns about the continuation of inappropriate command and control culture by some managers in parts of the LAS estate. She highlighted the view that whilst a command and control culture is suitable for major incidents and disasters that it is not appropriate as a system of communication between managers and front line staff on a day to day basis, especially as it is likely to be associated with bullying and harassment.

Heather acknowledged this issue and said that her ambition was to create a more sustainable and creative relationship between managers and front line staff.

7) **Interim Chief Information Officer** (CIO) – Ross Fullerton has been appointed to this post for six months. He will lead IT developments for the LAS and its workforce especially with regard to the CAD computer system and towards a fully integrated and competent frontline communication system, that works effectively with other parts of the NHS, to provide enhanced care for patients and access to summary care records.

**8) New Chief Executive** – Noted that Garrett Emmerson will join the LAS at the end of May. We asked for an invitation to be sent to him to briefly attend the Forum meeting on June 12th.

**9) VIP Awards –**We discussed the importance of the VIP awards as a positive symbol of how the LAS values it staff. Sister Josephine attended the ceremony and had welcomed the very positive comments of the HL towards the Forum.

**10) Patients’ Complaints –** we noted that in 2015-6 that only 8.8% of complaints to the LAS were upheld and 57% were not upheld. We suggested that there was a fundamental flaw in a system that upholds so few complaints. Many complaints are related to delays in response to patients, and breaches of commissioner and national targets, but these are often not upheld because the LAS argues that it is not responsible for delays caused by high pressure on its services.

**HL acknowledged that the complaints system needed to be improved and said that Trisha Bain would ensure that the necessary improvements took place in the short term.**

**11) LAS Website** – We expressed concern that the site is not sufficiently developed, up to date and versatile and needs radical improvement to make it suitable as a public interface site. Much of the information on the LAS site is out of date, the search engine is poor, e.g. see the following regarding the LAS chief executive: [www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/news/news\_releases\_and\_statements/appointment\_of\_new\_chief\_execu.aspx](http://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/news/news_releases_and_statements/appointment_of_new_chief_execu.aspx)

HL acknowledged the importance of a good public facing website, but said it is not currently a priority in view of other major priorities.

**12) CQC Summit –** This is due to be held on June 29th. The Forum has requested an invitation from the CQC, and HL will ensure that we are invited.

HL said that the LAS has discussed its progress with Dr Edward Baker, Deputy Chief Inspector of Hospitals for the CQC.

**13) CAD - Computer Aided Dispatch – Outage and Development**

The CAD system includes a number of components including the Northrop Grumman ‘command point’ system and the Oracle database.

HL said there are a number reports on the January 1st outage, which the Interim Chief Information Officer (CIO) – Ross Fullerton is bringing together.The report was promised for the May LAS Board meeting, but instead is going to the private session of the Board in June and will be released to the public at the July Board meeting. Ross will take action to prevent further outages.

We asked for access to the report prior to publication so that we can fully understand the system failures and communicate the findings to the public and other parties. HL did not agree to the Forum having prior access to the report, but did agree to the Forum having a discussion with Ross Fullerton a few days before publication, to enable the Forum to be conversant with the findings, recommendations, implementation plan and to understand the complexity of the issues raised in the report.

HL added that the LAS was questioning whether it was best practice for all AS to have different CAD IT systems, and was receiving advice and assistance from national leaders in the IT field, including new LAS NED Sheila Doyle, (works for Deloitte as UK Chief Information Officer and is responsible for drive digital innovation). HL also referred to the need to ensure that governance and accountability issues were adequate and appropriate to the LAS’s IT systems and contractual obligations. These issues would be subject to oversight by Philippa Harding, the new LAS Corporate Governance Officer (formerly Director of Operations (Regulation) at NHS Improvement, Director of Operations and Performance at Monitor, Board Secretary at Monitor).

Chief Executive, Andrew Grimshaw joined the meeting and explained some of the issues relating to the CAD outage. He said that the Oracle database has a recycle bin into which the oldest data is systematically transferred when no longer required. This should allow retrieval when required, except that the oldest data is gradually deleted as new data enters the recycle bin because the volume of data is so great. The outage was causes by the recycle bin failing to empty and becoming clogged with unwanted data. Consequently, the main system couldn’t discharge data and become overloaded and dysfunctional, and also failed to give to give pre-alert warning of an imminent system collapse.

The draft report on the outage was written by previous CIO Steve Bass. The report also contains an implementation plan to prevent further outages and this plan is being reviewed by Ross Fullerton. Purdah also prevents release of the report before the election.

**14) Major Disasters –** We asked HL why MIOs had not been allocated to A&Es following the Westminster Bridge terrorist incident? This issue will be raised with Paul Woodrow who leads on emergency planning.

**End**