

PATIENTS' FORUM

FOR THE LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE

MAY 2020

WE SALUTE THE MAGNIFICENT FRONT-LINE
STAFF SERVING LONDON IN AMBULANCES,
AMBULANCE CARS, EOC AND 111

PATIENTS' FORUM NEWSLETTER



LAS REVIEW THEIR PATIENT INVOLVEMENT PERFORMANCE

After 16 years of outstanding collaboration between the Patients' Forum and the LAS, the leadership of the LAS has decided to transform the way in which it hears the voices of the patients. They have, therefore, commissioned an 'independent review of the LAS experiences of public and patient engagement' and the 'actions that the Trust has taken so far to establish its new approach'. The review is being led by Mike Cooke, the Independent Chair of North Central London's Integrated Care System. We have had a very useful one hour zoom meeting with him.

Following the invitation from Heather Lawrence (LAS Chair) to participate in the review, we twice asked her for a copy of the term of reference for the review, but she has not replied. We are sure that Mike Cooke would be delighted to hear about your own experiences of patient and public involvement with the LAS, and particularly about our excellent collaboration on stroke care, sickle cell disorders, epilepsy, mental health, end of life care, diabetes and so much more. We hope that you will agree to participate in this review. If you would like to, please let us know and we will pass on your contact details to Mike Cooke.

Oddly, whilst claiming that they want to make sure that public and patient involvement is as successful as possible, they have blocked all of our Patientsforumlas@aol.com emails to the LAS, preventing communication taking place about service improvement, and demolishing effective PPI with the LAS.

URGENT AND EMERGENCY DENTAL CARE

The closure of dentists as a result of C-19, is causing pain and suffering to people with dental caries and other dental infections. Dental hubs for emergencies are being set up but access can be problematic. We are working with the Healthwatch and Public Involvement Association to carry out a Pilot Study to map the provision of UDC. There is a lot of confusion in the community, about how patients can best access urgent and emergency dental care at this time.

INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE LAS

Our members were actively involved in 10 LAS Policy and 'service development committees', including CARU the Clinical Audit and Research Unit and the End of Life Committee. We also attended interviews for new staff including the current Chief Executive, midwives, and other key staff.

LAS TO SET UP INTERNAL PPI COMMITTEE

The LAS is in the process of developing an updated Patient and Public Engagement Strategy. As part of this, they will establish an internal Public and Patients' Council, chaired by Dame Christine Beasley, former Chief Nursing Officer. Healthwatches in London have been invited to participate.

HEALTH MINISTER TO ARRANGE JOINT MEETING BETWEEN THE PATIENTS' FORUM AND LAS

Our members were very concerned about the changing approach of the LAS towards patient and public involvement. The LAS changed from being one of the most outstanding NHS/PPI organisations in London in the way it collaborated with Forum members, to one that became un-interested in the benefits of working closely with patients and the public, and particularly opposed to having its services monitored by patients and service users. However, over the past 13 years, the Forum has had a profound influence of the effectiveness of LAS services.

Many members wrote to their MP about this sudden change in attitude, and the Health Minister has agreed to set up a joint meeting between the Patients' Forum and the LAS to discuss how this matter can be resolved.

Thank you to our outstanding members for getting MPs and the Minister involved.

MONITORING THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE AND 111

In 2019, ten of our members participated in reviews of the Emergency Operations Centres at Waterloo and Bow. Each member spent five hours in the Centres talking to staff and observing how the Centres worked.

We produced detailed reports on our findings and made many recommendations for service improvement. We have been waiting six months the LAS to reply to our many service improvement recommendations.

See: <https://www.patientsforumlas.net/meeting-papers-2019.html>

HEALTHWATCH ENTER & VIEW – REFUSAL TO ALLOW ACCESS

Healthwatch Hackney has twice requested access to LAS services for statutory Enter and View visits and has twice been refused!

SAFE & EFFECTIVE SERVICES FOR LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

In September 2019, the Forum had an outstanding presentation from LAS LGBT Forum members Jules Lockett, Alex Ewings and Lee Hyett-Powell. This was the first joint event between the LGBT/LAS Forum and the Patients' Forum for the LAS.

A key part of Lee's presentation explained the importance, in relation to patient care, of ensuring that: "Staff to feel comfortable at work with colleagues and patients, are able to be mindful of their sexuality and the sexuality of others, and how consistent this is with working effectively to enhance patient care". He said that where staff feel confident and safe about being out, that the working environment is a happier and more successful one.

Our LGBTQ Newsletter can be found at: <https://www.patientsforumlas.net/equality--inclusion-and-diversity-in-the-las.html>

COMPLAINTS COLLABORATION WITH THE LAS

One of the outstanding areas of collaboration between the Forum and LAS was the joint development of the Complaints Charter. This document defines best practice for the investigation of complaints, and every complainant to the LAS is advised about access to the Charter. Key statements include:

- Tell us as soon as possible if you are unhappy with LAS services so that we can investigate your concerns and quickly try to put things right for you.
- Tell us if you have particular needs that we should be aware of e.g. an interpreter or other ways of ensuring effective communication with you".

See: www.patientsforumlas.net/uploads/6/6/0/6/6606397/a5-london_ambulance_complaints_charter_copy.pdf

COMPLAINTS COLLABORATION WITH THE LAS

Another important area of collaboration was our joint Complaints Review with Heather Lawrence, Chair of the LAS, together with the outstanding complaints investigation team and the quality team.

Five of our members regularly participated by spending several hours reading anonymised complaints, and then discussing our view of the quality of investigation and its outcomes. Recommendations were then agreed with the LAS Chair and we monitored implementation.

Our last meeting with Heather Lawrence was on November 7th 2019, and we are still waiting for the report on the outcome of that meeting and implementation of the recommendations that we agreed upon. Sadly, LAS priorities have changed and service improvement in this key area no longer appears to be a priority.

EDUCATION CENTRE - SUDDEN SHUT-DOWN of PPIP

In 2017, the Patients' Forum and the LAS Education Centre in Fulham established the **PPIP** – the joint **Patient and Public Involvement Panel** - a 'best practice' body established to monitor the HCPC programme for the transition of Emergency Ambulance Crew to Paramedics. It was an HCPC requirement.

We lectured to front-line staff on the importance of patient involvement, provided many volunteers to act as mock patients for staff assessments, monitored the effectiveness of the recruitment and assessment process for new recruits to the Paramedic programme, and contributed many hours to the development of this excellent programme.

As a result of the decision of the LAS to abandon effective public involvement, the PPIP was closed without any discussion or consultation with the Patients' Forum or the PPIP members. This was probably the worst example of an NHS body launching an assault on effective patient and public involvement in the recent history of the NHS.

QUALITY ACCOUNT - REMEMBERING CAROLINE FLACK

Every year NHS providers are required to produce a Quality Account statement, which describes what improvements need to be made to the services they provide and how these will be implemented.

Healthwatches and other public involvement bodies are invited to submit a statement for inclusion in the Quality Account and their wording cannot be changed by the NHS body. This year the Forum submitted a statement about the prevention of suicides, which included essential learning for the LAS about how to respond to patients suffering from suicidal ideation.

The statement was headed: "Remembering Caroline Flack – A patient describes her experiences of emergency care and the next steps for the LAS – Providing the Right Care – First Time to Prevent Suicide and Self-Harm".

You can see the statement at:

www.patientsforumlas.net/uploads/6/6/0/6/6606397/quality_account_statement_-_mental_health_-_march_2020-ok.pdf

SEIZURE FIRST-AID ROUND TABLE – IS 5 MINUTES TOO LONG?

The Epilepsy Society organised a seizure 'round table event' with epilepsy charities, the London Ambulance Service, the Patients' Forum and other patient representatives,

including epilepsy activists, Sean and Vic Hamilton. Unfortunately, this meeting scheduled for Friday, 20 March 2020 had to be called off because of C-19.

The Epilepsy Society are seeking consensus on the following issues:

- When to call an ambulance if someone is having a seizure in a public place.
- Is the practice of timing the seizure and waiting for five minutes before calling emergency services best practice?
- Should the 'Calm, Cushion, Call' campaign, be promoted further and how does it fit in with the 5-minute wait.

Let us know if you wish to participate when it is recalled or if you have ideas now.

CO-PRODUCTION CHARTER – LAS AND PATIENTS' FORUM

The Co-Production Charter was presented to the LAS by the Forum in 2019. We met Trisha Bain, Chief Quality Officer, in October 2019 and she confirmed that the LAS supports the Charter and would refer it to the Communications Department for implementation.

All London Healthwatches have been invited to be co-signatories. The Charter includes the following key points:

- Provides an effective means of designing, shaping and delivering services in a partnership between the LAS and people who have used services or may use them in the future.
- Enables delivery of shared objectives for the creation of better services and outcomes for patients.
- Sets out potential outcomes that people can expect from the co-production of urgent and emergency care services, and other care services provided by the London Ambulance Service.
- Sets out the responsibilities of people taking part in the co-production of services.
- Establishes principles which are intended to achieve a vision of service users as equal partners in the production of effective urgent and emergency care.
- Signals the direction of travel for integrated service development between the LAS, patients and the public.

THE CHARTER: www.patientsforumlas.net/co-production-in-the-las.html

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REMOVAL FROM THE MAILING LIST?

PLEASE LET US KNOW