

PATIENTS' FORUM

AMBULANCE SERVICES LONDON LTD

February 27th 2020

Dear Harriett, I would appreciate your help and advice.
Malcolm Alexander, Chair, Patients' Forum

LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE ATTEMPTS TO SILENCE PATIENTS' FORUM

The Patients' Forum for the LAS has had a collaborative, successful and outstanding relationship with the LAS since 2003. We have worked closely with hundreds of LAS staff at every level of the organization, to promote better patient care.

We have monitored LAS services and our members have given huge amounts of time as volunteers to support the LAS prior to CQC inspections. The Forum has also worked closely with the LAS Education Department, which trains staff to become paramedics. We have closely monitored the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and the 111 service for 5 hours periods and participated in 12-hour ride-outs. The Forum has also participated in numerous LAS policy committees. We have organized 100s of public meeting to which LAS staff were frequently invited to speak as part of our joint service improvement programme.

Since May 2019, the attitude of the LAS has changed substantially. The leadership have refused us access to their conference room for our monthly public meetings, refused to provide copies of documents, e.g. board papers, and stopped sending us monthly ambulance performance reports showing their response to emergencies and A&E ambulance queuing.

They have also tried to put pressure on the Forum to remove documents from our website and informed the Forum that our working relationships with colleagues across the LAS should stop, and that all contacts should be through a single email box. We tried to use that system, but the responses to our questions were frankly grossly inadequate, and we cannot work with the LAS on service improvement – our major goal, if we can't discuss patient care with clinical staff.

The LAS failed to respond to our recommendations for service improvements to the 111, EOC and complaint services – they have provided no responses at all to our 111 and EOC reports.

The performance of the LAS in relation to patient and public involvement has fallen to the lowest standard we have seen in any NHS organisation in London. They now treat patients and the public with disdain, and fail to show due regard to the NHS Constitution, NHS Improvement guidance and legislation which requires them to value the patient and public

voice.

The report that follows demonstrates the fantastic work that we have done with the LAS over recent years and which we are immensely proud of. We are confident and determined that the great public involvement work of the Patients' Forum will continue and will thrive, in order to meet the need of patients on the front line of emergency and urgent care.

Listening to the patient voice is fundamental to the development and growth of the LAS and its ability to provide outstanding patient care. We hope we can count on your support to take our work forward. It is also our hope that the LAS will review its attitude towards the Patients' Forum and work together with us to achieve not only its own aims, but also those of patients and the public across London.

Your support for this crucial campaign to restore effective public involvement in urgent and emergency care would be highly valued. At some point I would also like to discuss with you a plan to look at the London A&E crisis as a human rights issue.

Malcolm Alexander



Chair, Patients' Forum Ambulance services (London)

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OUR REPORT 'KICKED OUT BY THE LAS' IS ATTACHED