



**Brighton and Hove
Clinical Commissioning Group**

17 March 2013

Cllr Sven Rufus
Chair
Health and Wellbeing
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee
Brighton and Hove City

**Lanchester House
Trafalgar Place
Brighton BN1 4FU
Tel: 01273 295490
Fax: 01273 574737**

**Email: christa.beesley@nhs.net
Tel: 01273 574863**

Dear Cllr Rufus

A&E at the Royal Sussex County

As you will be aware, there has been a lot of media attention concerning A&E services at the Royal Sussex County in the past week, including a letter I had written to Chris Adcock which was unfortunately leaked to the BBC.

I am grateful for the opportunity to write to you and clarify the issues that have led to this situation and reassure you of the safety of care within our local services.

There is continued pressure on A&E services, not only locally but also across the country. Many people attend A&E for minor issues that could as easily have been self managed or managed by primary or community services. We have a significant programme of work within the CCG focusing on urgent care and alternatives to A&E that we would be really keen to update HWOSC members more on if they were interested. Additionally, the level of acuity of patients when they do need urgent admission into hospital – particularly our frail elderly community – is rising and the service is finding it challenging to meet their needs and appropriately discharge these more complex patients who often also have mental health needs or dementia. We are working with all our partners in the City, including primary care, the ambulance service, community and mental health services and social care to ensure the system around the hospital is working as effectively as it might be to provide alternatives to hospital admission and support early discharge.

This growth in attendance and acuity at our local A&E (about 3% on last year's figures) would not, on its own however, account for the deterioration in A&E performance over the last few months. BSUH and the CCG invited the Emergency Care Intensive Support Team (ECIST) from the Department of Health into BSUH recently to undertake a through review of A&E and flow within the hospital to understand better the contributing factors and actions that need to be taken to improve the experience of patients and performance of the service. The ECIST Team provided some initial feedback to the Hospital on what they needed to do immediately to improve the way in which A&E operated. One of the key actions involved putting a consultant on the front door of A&E to ensure people were rapidly assessed and treated by a very experienced clinician and

NHS Sussex represents the following primary care trusts:

NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald
NHS West Sussex

NHS Hastings and Rother
NHS Brighton and Hove

directed on the most appropriate pathway immediately. The full ECIST report is due to be made available this week and we have already agreed with the Trust the need for a focused internal action plan alongside system measures for recovering performance that I will oversee with the Trust on a weekly basis.

We must emphasise that staff at BSUH have been completely open about the challenges of working in a busy and over-crowded environment. We have heard from them directly, visited the department and discussed the clinicians' concerns with the Regional Area Team of the NHS Commissioning Board and the Care Quality Commission. We feel confident that all possible steps are being taken to make sure that the A&E service is safe, but we do acknowledge that it is not currently being delivered in a way that is providing the best quality of care or experience for patients in the City. The deterioration in the four hour target as well as the number of trolley breaches is of major concern to us as commissioners of this service. We are working extremely closely with the incoming Chief Executive, the Area Team as well as all our partners in the City to ensure there is a clear and detailed plan for bringing the standard of the service back to where we need it to be.

I know there is a HWOSC meeting coming up shortly. I or another senior member of the CCG will be on hand to answer any further questions you or the committee may have. Alternately, please do not hesitate to contact me in the meantime if you would like to discuss anything further.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Christa Beesley
Clinical Accountable Officer
Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS Sussex represents the following primary care trusts:

NHS East Sussex Downs and Weald
NHS West Sussex

NHS Hastings and Rother
NHS Brighton and Hove