

Please contact: Rosie Gunstone (direct line 01634 332715)

Your ref:

Our ref:

Date: 28 February 2013

To:
Felicity Cox
Local Area Team Director & NHS Kent
and Medway Chief Executive
By email

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Dear Ms Cox

**Re: KENT AND MEDWAY NHS CLUSTER BOARD MEETING - ADULT
MENTAL HEALTH INPATIENT SERVICES REVIEW**

Thank you for your letter dated 20 February 2013 summarising the discussion from the Board meeting earlier that day. I would just like to put forward a number of concerns from Medway Members of the Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which are set out below:

- Paragraph 2 of your letter refers to a number of outstanding issues that the JHOSC raised. Appendix 1 to this letter sets out the five questions raised at the cluster board meeting by Medway Members. As these questions remain unanswered, I would be grateful if you can confirm that a full response will be given to each of these five questions in time for the despatch of the agenda on 11 March 2013?
- The Medway Members in attendance at the cluster board meeting on 20 February were disappointed that the letter which I sent, also signed by Councillor Avey as Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, (attached as Appendix 2 to this letter) was not referred to at the meeting (other than at the point where I referred to its contents), neither was it part of the paperwork laid out on the table in the room for the meeting. The content of the letter was very important to the meeting not least because it was clearly requesting the Board to delay a decision on the review until such time as the predicted bed numbers data was validated by an independent source, as concerns have been raised, and it is clear that the data is based on reliable factual evidence.
- Paragraph 3 of your letter seems to imply that you are proposing that the door is now closed on the possibility of finding an alternative option, which meets the needs of Medway residents and those from surrounding areas of Kent. This point was not made at the cluster board meeting. Medway Councillors appreciate that the NHS has undertaken this work over the last 10 years, which in itself is worrying particularly in view of the number of serious untoward incidents, which have taken place during that period. There has not, however, been any engagement with officers of Medway Council to discuss options

during that period. No-one at Medway Council disagrees with the conclusion of the Board that the existing arrangements at 'A' block at Medway Maritime Hospital are unsatisfactory. The view of Medway Members is that from a social care perspective it is not in the best interests of Medway residents or residents from the surrounding areas of Medway for provision to be at Little Brook in Dartford, which is an isolated and inaccessible site. This will preclude a number of their carers and family from visiting their relative if they do not have access to a car. Public transport is complex and expensive. This social contact with family is vital not only for the patient's recovery but nearness to home is also important for Section 17 leave.

- There was no reference at the meeting either to another important point set out in the letter which was the example given of two recent examples in Medway of a lack of beds available for patients detained under the Mental Health Act. Similar issues were referred to by two of the carers in the audience at the cluster board meeting so this is obviously not an isolated incident.

Medway Councillors understand you wish to conclude this review before the end of March but I am sure you will want to have the reassurance that, bearing in mind the far reaching consequences of a wrong decision, any decision taken is based on reliable factual data and is in the best interests of residents of Kent and Medway.

I look forward to hearing from you to confirm that all the issues raised, not only those from Medway Council but also those articulated very competently by carers at the cluster board meeting will be addressed for the next JHOSC meeting on 19 March 2013.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Wendy Purdy
Vice-Chairman - Kent and Medway
NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Cc Mr C Smith (Chairman of the JHOSC)
Tristan Godfrey, KCC
Emailed to all JHOSC Members + Cllr Igwe