

Our Ref: CB.14.09.15

Councillor David Brake

NHS England - South (South East)
Wharf House
Medway Wharf Road
Tonbridge
Kent
TN9 1RE

Felicity.cox1@nhs.net
Tel 0113 824 8548

By email: david.brake@medway.gov.uk

14 September 2015

Dear David

I am writing to let you know about a short-term service change which will be implemented at Medway NHS Foundation Trust.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out an inspection of Medway NHS Foundation Trust at the end of August. As a result of this inspection the Trust asked for support from healthcare partners to help them in addressing concerns which were raised about the performance of the Trust's A&E department.

NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the CQC have agreed to put in place an ambulance divert at Medway Maritime Hospital for a short period to provide support to the Trust whilst ensuring patient safety and quality of care.

The ambulance divert will assist in alleviating pressures in the emergency department and help to move patients through the emergency care pathway, as well as allowing clinical leaders within the department a period of time to review existing processes and procedures in the department.

On Wednesday 16th September and Thursday 17th September ambulances will not take patients to Medway Maritime Hospital between the hours of 7am and Midday.

This will not apply to some patients according to clinical need including cardiac arrest, maternity, AAA (abdominal aortic aneurysm) and paediatric patients who will continue to be taken to Medway Maritime Hospital for treatment. Walk in patients attending the emergency department will also still be treated there.

The ambulance divert is being managed in a way which allows temporary changes to be put in place across the wider healthcare system to facilitate this measure.

We are also working with partners across the healthcare system to put in place further measures to support staff at the hospital. This includes additional training for clinical staff in the emergency department and bringing in experience clinical staff to work in Medway Maritime's A&E department to allow staff time to attend this training. We are also working with local authorities and community health teams to help to improve the flow of patients through the hospital.

I, along with the Medical Director and Director of Nursing at NHS England South (South East), have been actively engaging with the CQC with regards to the concerns raised. In the light of those discussions the CQC confirmed they felt a collaborative approach and introducing the ambulance divert and other support would be a good short-term solution.

NHS England and the CCGs are working with South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAMB), Medway Foundation Trust, other healthcare providers and the local authorities to put the ambulance divert in place. The majority of patients will be diverted to Maidstone Hospital or Darent Valley Hospital in Dartford for treatment. We are also working with community health providers and local authorities to improve the flow of patients across the healthcare system.

The main impact of the divert will be on South East trusts. It is not intended to divert any ambulances to London. However the London Ambulance Service will not be taking any patients to Darent Valley Hospital, which often accepts patients brought in by the London ambulance service, during this time.

Medical directors in NHS England have undertaken a full clinical risk assessment of the proposed divert to ensure the safety and quality of care for patients.

NHS England, CCGs and providers are working together to consider a longer term solution. I will update you as soon as further information on this is available. If you have any questions on this in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact my business office at england.southeast@nhs.net

Yours sincerely



Felicity Cox
Director of Commissioning Operations
NHS England South (South East)