

Overview & Scrutiny

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Haringey Council

Head of Strategy and Business Intelligence Eve Pelekanos

Your ref:

Date: 06 November 2012

Our ref: SR/ DWSA

Direct dial: 0208 489 2933

Email: Melanie.Ponomarenko@haringey.gov.uk

Dear Maria,

Re: Downhills Ward at St Ann's

Many thanks for your letter dated 5th October, which Cllr Rice has asked that I respond to as Chair of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel.

The Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel (A&HSP) has a number of concerns about the processes and speed of decision for the closure as well as concerns about the closure itself.

Whilst Overview and Scrutiny is aware of the long term strategy of developing a greater range of alternatives to inpatient mental health care we would have expected the decision to close Downhills to be referred to scrutiny, as well as to other relevant stakeholders, for consideration, as has happened on previous occasions.

We would like to know what the proposed timetable is for closing Downhills Ward as well as what consultation and engagement is planned to ensure that all stakeholders are fully involved in the decision making process. We would also like to know when comments from scrutiny are expected in order to be taken into consideration.

We have serious concerns as to the speed in which an apparent decision has been made to close Downhills Ward and move vulnerable patients without proper consultation with patients and carers and would like further information on what led to this failure as well as reassurance that this will not happen again. It would seem that if inpatient numbers are regularly monitored and Recovery Houses have had an impact over a matter of months, then there should have been ample time to fully engage with patients and carers.

The Panel also has concerns that should Downhills Ward close there will no longer be an inpatient facility for females based within the Borough. Whilst we appreciate that the long term intention is to redevelop Haringey Ward and Finsbury Ward to accommodate both male and female patients it would appear that the redevelopment is still in its early stages and the closure of Downhills would mean a lack of female beds for a considerable amount of time. We would find it very useful to gain more of an understanding how many female patients have been affected already by being placed at Chase Farm rather than St Ann's and what the future projections are for female inpatient need.



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We would also like further information on the following areas:

- What services are currently in place to replace those currently offered at Downhills Ward.
- Whether those who are to be discharged to other clinical settings following their current episode of care will be transferred to Chase Farm.
- How the trust intends to support carers, relatives, friends and others who will be inconvenienced.

I have asked Melanie Ponomarenko (who supports the A&HSP) to look at dates for a special Panel meeting in order to discuss the matters outlined above with BEH MHT.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Gina Adamou
Chair
Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel

CC. Cllr Rice, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel
Mental Health Carers Support Association
Lisa Redfern – Deputy Director, Adult and Community Services



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