

HAVERING FABIANS

Sanchia Alasia wrote the following following last weeks meeting. Hope you find this interesting.

Care quality commission listening event

On Tuesday 15TH October, 2013, I attended a listening event hosted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC are running listening events for each of the first 18 NHS trusts that they are inspecting under our new model. Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Trust (BHRUT) is currently being inspected under this model.

The purpose of the event was to listen to users and key stakeholders about their personal experiences of using the trust's services, share feedback on how improvements need to be made and find out how the new inspections will be carried out. The views and experiences shared will shape how the CQC inspectors determine which areas to look at during the inspections.

As chair of the health scrutiny committee on Barking and Dagenham council, I raised a number of issues in relation to BHRUT. There is already a wealth of data that describes the problems at the trusts hospitals, including accident and emergency performance statistics, friends and family tests, mortality rates and the hospitals financial position, as it is currently in £240m deficit. I expressed my hope for the future, in that I would like to see all patients at Queen's hospital having a positive experience. To that end improvements are needed in consistency of care, so that this can be achieved, as the Trust has bottom ranking scores in patient surveys. This is particularly relevant to the Queen's hospital accident and emergency department, which is still struggling to get to grips with demand, staffing issues and waiting times. The trust recently issued proposals to close the accident and emergency services at King George hospital, only to have the clinical commissioning groups (CCG) challenge the proposal which was eventually removed. This reflects perhaps a lack of joined up working between the CCG's and the trust.

I pointed out that communication between the Trust and Barking and Dagenham council has improved over the years. They have a seat on our health and wellbeing board and send me regular strategic bulletins.

CQC themselves have raised in previous inspection reports, that the structure and design of Queen's hospital is not particularly helpful to people using it. Some of these issues will be very difficult to address as they will require considerable investment and capital works, acknowledging that new signage has been out in place.

I did want to acknowledge that there have been real improvements in maternity services at Queen's hospital, which must have taken a lot of effort and hard work. However I highlighted the need for these improvements to be sustained in the long term, especially with all the pressures the hospital is facing with its accident and emergency department and the increasing birth rate in the borough's the hospital serves.

So concerns about BHRUT remain and I'm sure all of the relevant health and wellbeing boards and health scrutiny committees in Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge will continue to keep a close eye on the issues, as well as invite CQC representatives to their respective meetings, to talk about how the new inspection regime is progressing.

Sanchia is a Labour Barking and Dagenham Councillor and standing for Labour in the 2014 European Elections