

HUW MERRIMAN MP
(BEXHILL & BATTLE)



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Wendy Carberry
Chief Operating Office
High Weald Lewes Havens CCG
36-38 Friars Walk
Lewes,
East Sussex
BN7 2PB

Our Ref: HM/FM/362

6 September 2016

Dear Wendy,

We write further to our meetings with you and your colleagues from the CCG, and with Coperforma, in June and July of this year, in addition to communications held thereafter. During these discussions, we discussed the stability of the Sussex patient transport contractual model which involved the CCG operating at an arms-length from the driver operatives (with Coperforma sitting in the middle of this arrangement).

We refer in particular to our conversations with regard to the patient transport drivers who originally moved employment from SECamb, to Langfords and, ultimately, to Docklands. We are grateful for your assurance that the CCG expects these drivers to be paid on the same NHS terms and conditions as per their employment with SECamb. We understand that representatives are meeting with Docklands today and we are hopeful that the CCG and Coperforma can take all necessary steps to ensure that the services which Docklands and its drivers are providing for our patients can be funded and delivered in a manner which permits the service to be run professionally.

Whilst any employment issue will be a matter for the parties or court to determine, we ultimately restate our concern that issues of this type will lead to a lack of available drivers and, in turn, our constituents being unable to attend hospital appointments on time or at all. This will have a detrimental impact on clinicians and staff at our hospitals. We welcomed the patient transport improvements made since June and are concerned that any lack of stability will impact upon service performance.

You have explained today that you are working with a Patient Transport expert, NHS England and NHS Improvements to ensure that there is sufficient support in the system to plan for any outcome should drivers cease operating. You have

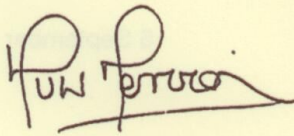
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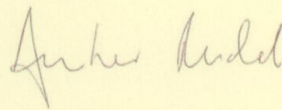
also explained that you will take all necessary steps to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of both patients and drivers is maintained. We are keen to support you. We note that the contractual model, and the number of parties responsible for delivering the service, requires extra rigidity and diligence in the system and may need revisiting. Notwithstanding that Coperforma is charged with contracting with driver operatives, we believe that the situation is such that it would be prudent for the CCG to directly involve itself in discussions with the driver operatives to ensure that they, and their drivers, are able to provide the patient transport to our constituents.

We would be grateful to be kept fully informed as matters develop. Please contact Huw Merriman who will cascade communication to all Sussex MPs.

Yours sincerely,



Huw Merriman MP
Bexhill and Battle



Amber Rudd MP
Hastings and Rye

And

Sir Peter Bottomley MP – Worthing West

Sir Nicholas Soames MP – Mid Sussex

Caroline Ansell MP - Eastbourne

Maria Caulfield MP – Lewes

Nusrat Ghani MP – Wealden

Henry Smith MP – Crawley

Peter Kyle MP – Hove and Portslade

Nick Herbert MP – Arundel and South Downs

Simon Kirby MP – Brighton Kemptown

Tim Loughton MP – East Worthing and Shoreham