

Dear Councillor Fowler,

We are aware that the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee is monitoring ongoing improvement planning at the Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH) in response to recent Care Quality Commission inspection reports focusing on RSCH and on the broader operations of University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust.

We want to share with you issues about RSCH A&E services that have been brought to our attention by local residents. Multiple people have expressed concerns to us about the situation at A&E. These include general overcrowding, and specifically a lack of safe spaces for frail or vulnerable patients. We understand that a side corridor is meant to be used as a quiet space, but that in practice, this is frequently employed to manage disruptive patients. This has meant that there is effectively no quiet space for vulnerable patients. We have also been told that A&E can be so noisy and chaotic that patients waiting for an initial assessment are unable to hear their names being called, and that people have missed being seen for this reason.

We recognise that the RSCH is an intensely pressured environment. We also recognise that the Trust has medium term plans to restructure its Emergency Department to provide a better environment for both patients and staff. However, we are very concerned that, in the short term, not enough is being done to manage A&E, and that seriously ill people may be deterred from seeking urgent help because of worries about their safety within the hospital.

We understand that you will be talking to the CEO of University Hospital Sussex at your 10 April committee meeting, and request that you include discussion of the A&E environment at this meeting, or that you arrange for a separate item focusing on A&E at a subsequent meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Bruno De Oliveira, Chair, Brighton & Hove Health & Wellbeing Board

Cllr Tristram Burden, Lead Member, Adult Social Care

