

Ref: 201202-126

Southside
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Cluster Chief Executives
(By email only)

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27 February 2012

Dear Cluster Chief Executives,

Current A&E performance

I am extremely concerned at the level of A&E performance currently being delivered across London. Compared with the last two winters, we have not seen a recovery in performance following the dip in December and early January. All type performance of 94.08% last week was the worst in 2011/12 so far, and average all type performance over the last four weeks of 95.10% only narrowly meets the national operational standard. Several trusts are almost certain to fail to meet the all type standard for Quarter 4. Ambulance handover delays are also very concerning as a key indicator of patient care.

This problem has arisen despite relatively mild weather and the investment of substantial access initiative funding, with £30m committed in Quarter 4 to schemes to improve A&E performance in London. The access initiative funding should be an important lever in achieving the performance trajectories agreed with your teams for each provider for January, February and March. Across London, only six Trusts receiving access initiative funding met their A&E access trajectories for January, while thirteen failed. The table attached summarises provider performance against the agreed trajectories.

I recognise that many staff are working extremely hard in order to ensure that patients receive the best possible care and are working under considerable pressure. However, there is some evidence that planning needs to be improved – for example a number of Trusts have attributed operational problems to staffing shortages during half term and the effects of the junior doctor rotation, both of which should surely have been mitigated against.

I would be grateful for your assurance by return that:

- you are being regularly appraised of progress in implementing the access initiatives, and that significant schemes which are off track are being brought to your personal attention;
- you are in regular and frequent dialogue with provider CEOs over current performance and your personal expectations;

London Strategic Health Authority

Chair: Professor Mike Spyer

Chief Executive: Dame Ruth Carnall DBE

- your team has a clear, evidence-based understanding of the causes of underperformance, the remedial actions which are being taken, and the impact they are expected to have;
- your team is receiving daily A&E performance updates from providers against the operational standard.

I am sure you share with me a commitment to provide a better service to our patients.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Carnall', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dame Ruth Carnall DBE
Chief Executive

cc: Sara Coles, Director of Performance