

Mr M Docherty
West Midlands Ambulance Service

By Email

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3 August 2016

Dear Mark,

Further to my e-mail of 7 July, and our conversations last week, I am writing to you concerning the removal of the Rapid Response vehicle currently based in Leek.

You will recall that when I first wrote, I asked for WMAS to give Healthwatch some further background to the planned changes, and some assurance about the ability to hit the 8 minute response times. I realise that there were some issues in getting a response to my note, and we therefore ensured that we had representation both from staff and volunteers at the public meeting held in Leek last Friday night. Unfortunately, however, the reports I have received from both staff and volunteers, is that the WMAS representatives at the meeting failed to address all the issues raised by the public, and as a consequence failed to allay public concerns about the changes.

Specifically, the issues that were felt be unanswered were as follows:

- Very little notice was given for the meeting – we only were notified the day before – and no explanation was given for this;
- Concerns that the larger ambulance proposed would not be able to access the more isolated communities – farm drives, rural streets etc. especially in inclement weather;
- Concerns that response times have increased significantly in recent times and that this change might exacerbate this situation;
- A strong feeling from the public that the Rapid Response Vehicle is working well and still very much wanted by the community so why the need to change?
- Why has Leek been chosen for this change?
- Why was there no prior public and stakeholder engagement and consultation on this change?
- Concerns that the nature of the geography demands local knowledge which the crew of RRV have, but which may not be held by the crew of the larger ambulance.

I would be really grateful if you or a relevant colleague were able to provide responses to these issues which we can then convey to the public and help them to understand more about the background to these changes, and to provide reassurance at a time when there is public concern. I would also be grateful if you could let me know the WMAS response to the public meeting, as it was promised at the meeting that the concerns raised would be discussed with the management team

Many thanks for your help in the matter,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jan Sensier', followed by a period.

Jan Sensier
Chief Executive
Healthwatch Staffordshire