

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING – 23 OCTOBER 2013**

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Question by: Mr Peter Chutter

To: Cabinet Member for Community Care

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**QUESTION**

“Does the council agree with Dr Mark Spencer's comments on TV that the increased journey time to a suitable hospital, other than Charing Cross if you live in the Charing Cross Hospital area, will only be about one and half minutes?”

**Answer**

I think it is wrong to solely focus on ambulance times. We should also be focusing on what happens to you when you reach hospital.

There is considerable evidence emerging that, even with longer ambulance times, patients have better outcomes if they go to a hospital that has the dedicated resources to deal with their particular emergency, with expert-round-the-clock care.

The Academy of Royal Medical Colleges, representing most of Britain's 220,000 doctors, has supported the creation of larger and better staffed units which are lead by consultants 7 days per week.

For example, if you suffer a heart attack and live in the south of the borough, you have a greater chance of survival if the ambulance carries on past Charing Cross to Hammersmith, Hospital which has a world-class cardiology unit with specialist staff and equipment.

This idea that every hospital has to offer a wide-range of services is unsafe and costs lives – because not every hospital can have sufficient resources to deal with every specialist emergency. There just are not enough senior clinicians in the country to do this.

Dr Andy Mitchell, Medical Director for NHS England in London, has recently been quoted as saying that “this idea that all hospitals provide a whole range of services is unsustainable and unsafe”

To put it starkly, if you were unlucky enough to arrive with a serious emergency at a general hospital, on a Sunday night at the moment, you would have less chance of survival due to the potential absence of any consultant clinicians.

What Hammersmith & Fulham Council has been pushing hard for, and continues to push hard for, is to ensure that Charing Cross's emergency unit offers the very best standard of care possible within this local expert-care network.

We want to see our local A&E available for as many residents as possible - which is why we have lobbied hard for stronger emergency facilities at Charing Cross.