

Template letter for GPs

Dear Dr.....

I am writing to you as one of your patients to urge you to do everything you can to oppose the disastrous closure of the Charlie Chaplin Children's Ward at Ealing Hospital on 30th June and the plans to exclude children from the A&E.

Ealing Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has taken the decision to close these services there being despite grave concerns that seriously ill children could be put at risk.

Under the CCG plans ambulances would no longer bring sick children to Ealing's A&E. However the vast majority of seriously ill children are carried in by their parents or carers anyway. These children would now only be seen by a GP in the Urgent Care Centre, where they are supposed to be assessed, treated and stabilised before being transferred to another hospital.

This a serious break with current standards of care and treatment of sick children in Ealing who are assessed and treated by a Paediatric Consultant and specialist trained Senior Nurse in the A&E and are able to stay overnight for observation and assessment. It would be a hugely risky experiment to take with Ealing's children and Paediatric specialists have expressed serious concerns about its safety.

Families quite rightly expect their children to be seen by the A&E staff – A&Es don't exist for adults only - otherwise **they are not a proper A&E.**

How can the CCG make such a decision without publishing figures for the number of children that will be affected? Up to 7000 children could be brought in to A&E by their parents and carers, quite apart from those using the ambulance service. They will have to be assessed and treated by the Urgent Care Centre and transferred elsewhere.

Even supposing that a child can be safely treated how can we be sure that the London Ambulance Service, which is already failing to meet crucial target times, can move seriously ill children to another hospital quickly enough. Given the pressure they are under it is likely they may consider a child as low priority or safe once they are in Ealing Hospital, so how can children be safely and urgently transferred?

In any event the delay involved through two lots of assessments and prolonged journeys for families is unacceptable.

We are being told that a new Rapid Access Clinic has been set up for GPs to provide paediatric support. However we understand this only operates part of the week and only deals with non-urgent cases so it would be nothing like a substitute for the existing service.

It seems the CCG have no regard for the safety of our children in Ealing and therefore we need to hear the voices of local GPs opposing these changes.

Therefore we ask you to make your voice heard as our GP and call on the CCG to halt the plans to close the Childrens Ward and thereby protect local children's access to the A&E.

Your sincerely