



London Ambulance Service

NHS Trust

Operations Directorate

Headquarters
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Dear Andrew Blake-Herbert,

I am writing to provide you with an update on some developments the Trust is undertaking to further improve the high quality, urgent and emergency care we provide to Havering and the surrounding area.

As you will know from our 2018-2021 [Strategy](#), we outlined our ambition to become a world-class ambulance service for a world-class city through seven enabling strategies, one of which is the transformation of our operations and estate to ensure it is fit for the modern 21st Century. We recognised that our estate comprised of an eclectic mix of property inherited and accumulated over many years, much of which dated back to the Victorian times of horse-drawn ambulances in 1880s, and was not fit for purpose in a modern, world-class city.

In driving forward our strategy and taking on board the recommendations from Lord Carter's review into ['Operational productivity and performance in English NHS ambulance trusts: unwarranted variation'](#), we published our ['Estates Vision'](#) in 2019 which detailed how we plan to overhaul our estate by replacing our existing 68 stations with a network of circa 18 state-of-the-art Ambulance Deployment Centres, operating under a new 'Hub and Spoke' model.

These Ambulance Deployment Centres, which will be supported by strategically located standby points and rest and refreshment posts for our staff and volunteers across London, aim to have modern, fit for purpose facilities for all of our staff and volunteers. This includes having ambulance 'make ready' and light vehicle maintenance facilities, modern management, administrative, training and wellbeing facilities available to our crews at the start and end of their shift, which will help improve the standard of care we provide to our patients across London. This model is already successfully used across other ambulance services, including West Midlands Ambulance Service and South East Coast Ambulance Service.

I am delighted to share that after careful review and consideration of our estate, a site has been selected in Romford, North East London for the development of our first pioneer Ambulance Deployment Centre, subject to planning permission. Discussions for planning permission with Barking and Dagenham Borough Council have commenced, and we have informed staff and volunteers of these discussions and will continue to update them on progress made. Please see a photo below of our vision for our pioneer Ambulance Deployment Centre in Romford.

In developing an Ambulance Deployment Centre in Romford, we plan to merge our existing stations of Romford, Ilford, Hornchurch and Becontree. Once the new ambulance station is up and running, this will ultimately result in the permanent closure of these stations.

It is important for you to know that there will be no job losses as a result of these closures. All staff and volunteers affected by this long-term relocation are being regularly informed, supported throughout and will be formally consulted with later in the year.

By way of background, since summer last year Romford's staff and volunteers have already been temporarily working from the larger and better equipped Ilford ambulance station as part of our London-wide estate consolidation measures implemented to cope with the challenges presented by COVID-19. This move has hugely benefited staff and volunteers, who, through starting and ending their shift at a station with co-located facilities, have had greater access to improved vehicle preparedness, increased management and wellbeing



support and better distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE). Through these measures, we have been able to keep our crews safe whilst also improving our performance in Havering and the surrounding area.

Romford Group has been chosen as the first site for a number of reasons. As you will already know, the current Romford Ambulance Station location is in a site designated for major regeneration as part of the proposed Bridge Close Regeneration Scheme, so a new location is urgently needed. The population around the Romford area is predicted to have the largest population growth in London, and our current estate will not be fit for purpose to respond to their needs. Due to the locality of Romford, we will be able to develop the new operating model with limited impact on the wider service.

I'd like to provide you with some information about how we work to provide you with the assurance that this change will not adversely affect patients in the area. It will instead transform the way we work to ensure we deliver consistent high quality care to our patients when they need us.

As a fully mobile health service which covers a large geographical area, our dispatch methodology allocates the most appropriate resources to each and every incident, which means that a majority of incidents we attend are dispatched from hospitals, standby points across London or directly from responding to a previous patient, rather than from ambulance stations directly. Of the 36,626 incidents attended in Havering in 2019 only 26% received a response directly from an ambulance station, with 17% of these coming from the Romford ambulance station vicinity only.

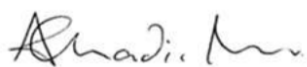
As the overwhelming majority of our ambulances are not dispatched from ambulance stations, the proposed relocation will have no impact on the provision of services to patients in Havering and the surrounding area. We therefore do not believe that this change will amount to a substantial variation in the provision of health services in your area. As a consequence we do not believe that there is a requirement for public consultation. We would like to speak to you about this in more detail, both with your council and collectively with other councils in the surrounding area, to confirm you agree with this. We understand there is an Outer North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee which we would be happy to engage with to discuss this further.

In modernising our operations through the development of an Ambulance Deployment Centre in Romford, an ambulance station which will be designed around patient care and will enable rapid and efficient preparation and deployment of our frontline teams, we believe this will help ensure we can provide continued high quality care to our patients in Havering and the surrounding area first time, every time.

We will shortly begin engaging with stakeholders in Havering and the surrounding area to inform them of our exciting plans to create an operating model, and estate, that is fit for the future and helps us achieve our vision of becoming a world-class ambulance for a world-class city.

If you have any questions regarding these plans, please do not hesitate to contact our Stakeholder Communications Manager Philippa Keir on 07342 087326 or via email: philippa.keir@nhs.net who will respond promptly and can help assist with any further information you may require.

Yours sincerely,



Khadir Meer

Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Chief Executive
London Ambulance Service





Figure 1 Artist impression of an LAS Ambulance Deployment Centre in Romford

