

Clr Mark Williams
Chair, Health & Adult Social
Care Scrutiny sub-Committee
160 Tooley Street
London
SE1 2TZ



Scrutiny Team
Direct dial: 020 7525 0514

Date: 21 March 2012

Dear Stuart Bell

SLaM: consultation on reorganisation of Mental Health of Older Adults Service (MHOA)

Southwark Council's Health and Adult Social Care scrutiny committee met on Wednesday 14 March and considered your early proposals to reorganise your services to increase crisis support in community settings for older adults with mental health needs, and the consequent loss of inpatient beds to fund this change and in anticipation of reduced demand.

Members of the committee considered the trigger template, produced at our request, and evidence from your senior managers concerned with planning the proposed reorganisation. The committee also heard evidence from a spokesperson from Southwark Pensioners Action Group (SPAG).

SPAG raised concerns with the cumulative effect of cuts to inpatient hospital beds and the reduction in high support care home placements for older people experiencing mental distress and / or cognitive impairment. The spokesperson cited the closure of Felix Post two years ago, Holmhurst's closure last year and the more recent closure of the Beckett Unit in Greenhive care home. Anecdotal evidence was received concerning two deaths of older people who were users of MHOA services. Concerns were raised by SPAG about the heightened risk to service users when services close and the perception that community care can be more risky than inpatient care.

The committee understands that you consider that the extension of community care will better meet service users' needs and that maintaining older people's independence in the community through increased support during the weekend and in the evening, and this in turn will decrease the need for inpatient beds. Your verbal evidence outlined that the proposal represents an anticipated loss of 19 beds out of a total of 81 beds. You also assured the committee that these proposals are still being developed and have not been implemented.

Your evidence indicated that you are in the early stages of planning the reorganisation and consultation to date has been principally with relevant health and social care commissioners, but with some early engagement work with service users.

Scrutiny team, Southwark Council, Communities, law and governance, PO BOX 64529, SE1P 5LX

Switchboard: 020 7525 5000 **Website:** www.southwark.gov.uk

Chief executive: Annie Shepperd

The committee indicated that they consider this change to be a significant variation and as such welcome your commitment to carrying out a full 12 week consultation with services users and other stakeholders affected by the proposed changes.

The committee requested that you come back to a following meeting outlining:

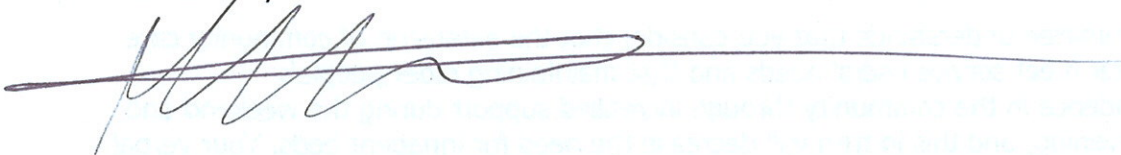
- more details on the budget including details of any overall disinvestment to this service and the exact numbers of beds that could be lost and the scale of the investment in the new community crisis team
- details of your consultation plan to engage and consult with service users and stakeholders about the proposal
- how you might use capacity across SLaM if there is an unexpected need for acute inpatient care for older adults with mental health needs.

Please can you provide details on the above by the 5 April, so these can be circulated to the committee, and attend the next committee meeting on 10 April 2012.

If you have any queries please contact Julie Timbrell, scrutiny project manager, in the first instance via email: julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk or by telephone on 02075250514.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Mark Williams", written over a horizontal line.

Cllr Mark Williams

Chair, Southwark Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny sub-committee

Cc Zoë Reed, Executive Director Strategy and Business Development.
David Norman, Service Director, MHOA
Susanna White, Strategic Director of Health and Community Services
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle, Southwark Cabinet member for Health and Adult Social Care
Tom White, SPAG

Scrutiny team, Southwark Council, Communities, law and governance, PO BOX 64529, SE1P 5LX

Switchboard: 020 7525 5000 **Website:** www.southwark.gov.uk

Chief executive: Annie Shepperd