

Marie Goldman

MP for Chelmsford



There is NO Government plan to improve trust that runs hospital

WHEN the Government announced its new Intensive Recovery Support Programme back in March, many of us in Chelmsford hoped it might finally mark a turning point for our local NHS.

The Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust (MSEFT), which runs Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford, is one of the five worst-performing trusts in the country. Staff are exhausted. Patients are waiting too long. Families are anxious. Any meaningful help would have been welcome.

But hope only works when it is backed by substance. And as I've now discovered, there is none.

After hearing that MSEFT were still waiting for information about the programme - weeks after it was announced - I wrote to the Government asking for clarity. Last week, I received a response from the Minister of State for Health. It confirmed what no MP, no NHS worker and certainly no patient should ever have to hear: there is no plan.

The letter explains that NHS England's regional team will "work with the trust's chief executive to develop evidence-based solutions," but offers no detail, no timeline, no resources and no actual programme.

In other words, the Government has announced a support scheme and then handed the responsibility straight back to the very organisations it claimed it would help.

As I said in my press release, the Government has "announced a support programme that doesn't really exist." It is not a political flourish. It is the plain truth.

For two months, our local trust has been left in limbo. Staff have been waiting. Patients have been waiting. And now we learn that what they were waiting for simply isn't there.

This is not just disappointing — it is, as I said in my statement, "utterly shocking and symbolic of a failing, rudderless government that has no real vision for our country."

When a trust is struggling, the Government's job is to step in with clarity and support, not to issue



The helipad at Broomfield Hospital does not operate around the clock, meaning the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance must land elsewhere during emergencies at certain times
MARIE GOLDMAN MP

press releases and walk away.

Behind every missed target, every delayed appointment, every cancelled operation, there is a person - often someone in pain, someone anxious, someone who has already waited too long.

The people of Chelmsford deserve better than empty announcements. They deserve a functioning NHS, staffed by people who are supported, not stretched to breaking point.

And while ministers have been busy announcing programmes without content, others have been quietly getting on with the job of saving lives.

Across the UK, air ambulance charities provide some of the most advanced pre-hospital care available anywhere in the world.

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance is no exception. Its teams bring critical care directly to people in life-threatening situations - cardiac arrests,

major trauma, serious collisions - often reaching patients far faster than a land ambulance ever could.

They operate without fanfare, without political noise, and without the luxury of waiting for someone else to act. They simply get on with it.

I recently visited an air ambulance charity in another part of the UK, and then I met with the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance team at an event in Parliament.

What struck me most both times was not just their skill, though that is extraordinary, but their calm, their compassion and their absolute focus on the needs of the patients who they rescue, treat and serve day in, day out. They are the very best of us.

But even the best clinicians in the world can only work with the infrastructure around them. And that brings me to a problem closer to home.

Not all hospital helipads in the UK operate around the clock. Shockingly, that includes the helipad at Broomfield Hospital.

This means that in certain emergencies - the very moments when

every second counts - air ambulances may be forced to divert, adding precious minutes to a patient's journey. Minutes that can be the difference between life and death.

It is simply not acceptable that a major hospital serving a city the size of Chelmsford cannot receive air ambulances at all hours. Essex & Herts Air Ambulance does its job brilliantly. We need to make sure the system around it does too.

That is why I will be working closely with the local NHS and the air ambulance charity to fix this. It won't require a national announcement. It won't require a glossy press release.

It will require practical action, the kind that actually improves outcomes for patients.

At first glance, the Government's empty Intensive Recovery Support Programme and the issue of Broomfield's helipad might seem like separate stories. But they are, in fact, two sides of the same coin.

Both reveal what happens when systems fail to match the urgency and dedication of the people working within them.

On the one hand, we have a Government that announces a major support programme for struggling NHS Trusts, and then fails to provide any detail, direction or resource.

On the other, we have air ambulance charities who save lives every day, but who are held back by infrastructure that simply isn't good enough.

In both cases, the people of Chelmsford are being let down.

Chelmsford residents deserve an NHS that works. They deserve a Government that delivers on its promises. And they deserve emergency services that are supported by the infrastructure they need.

I will continue pressing ministers to explain how they intend to repair the mess they have created with the so-called Intensive Recovery Support Programme. And I will continue working locally to ensure that life-saving services like Essex & Herts Air Ambulance can operate without unnecessary barriers.

Because while the Government may be content with words, our community needs action.

Marie

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