

Dawn Butler MP
Labour MP for Brent Central
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Dr Ethie Kong
Chair of Brent CCG
Brent Clinical Commissioning Group
Wembley Centre for Health & Care
116 Chaplin Road
Wembley
HA0 4UZ

Office of Dawn Butler MP
156 High Road
Willesden
London
NW10 2PB

6 September 2016
Our Ref: ZA9344

Dear Dr Kong,

I am writing to put on record my deep concern at the recent decision taken by Brent CCG to decommission the Brent Sickle Cell Advisory Support Service (BSCASS).

BSCASS provides a thoroughly vital and valued service to the communities of Harlesden and Stonebridge and beyond which has a high prevalence of sickle cell sufferers. This is a poorly understood condition and services such as BSCASS are vital in helping sufferers live normal and healthy lives.

It is also vital in providing assurances to sufferers who are discharged from hospital, that extra help prevents sufferers often immediately returning into hospital, for example if a person's house is too cold.

In particular, I would like answers to the following questions:

- What consultation, beyond the reported meeting due to take place on the 7th September 2016, has been carried out with sickle cell sufferers and service users within Brent?
- Has an equality impact assessment been carried out ahead of the decision to decommission this service? And if not, why did you not feel it appropriate to do so?
- Brent CCG's own report suggests service users will be 'signposted to advocacy and advisory services within the borough'. What assessment has been made of the travel

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I may write to you from time to time. If you do not wish to receive any correspondence from me please write to me at the above address.

implications of decommissioning for residents of Harlesden and Stonebridge where a majority of local sickle sufferers are based?

- Have you conducted a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis in relation to the decommissioning of this service? I understand that the CCG acknowledges a reduction in admissions as a result of the service. Will you also publish any data you have on this point?

I should declare an interest as an MP who is sickle cell trait and my brothers have the full blown disease I understand the complicated needs around sufferers, I have always been so impressed with the service provided by Brent, recently the erosion of this service starting with the relocation of the services from Central Middlesex hospital has been extremely disappointing.

You have no idea how painful it is to sit when you are in crisis and to expect someone to travel an extra 60mins for help is very cruel. The decommissioning of this service adds further to the existing health burden of my constituents and represents a growing inequality in the provision of healthcare services within the borough.

Finally, if this is a question of fiscal constraints then I believe we need to look at new and innovative ways to ensure the preservation of this service. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with the CCG and community activists to explore alternate funding arrangements that would deliver this outcome. I am pleading with you to reconsider your decision.

I look forward to your reply,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Butler', with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Dawn Butler MP

Labour Member of Parliament for Brent Central

cc. John James – Chief Executive of the Sickle Cell Society