

Dear Robert Morton

We, the staff of Cromer and North Walsham Ambulance Stations, call on you to immediately halt the rota redesign process.

Over the past few years we have experienced a relentless surge in demand which shows no signs of abating over the coming months or years, alongside a long term recruitment freeze in our area, where staff leaving have not been replaced.

We have also endured worsening late finishes with no effective strategy implemented to address them, negatively impacting on our work / life balance.

In October 2017, just before the winter period, the Trust removed the staff support desk; which sent a clear message to staff that their welfare appears unimportant to the trust.

Over the past few weeks frontline staff have had Director level imposed restrictions on annual leave for five months of the year, and negative changes to alternative working duties, which worsens support for ill or injured staff.

This rota redesign project through the forced introduction of relief into rotas and the altering of pre existing rotas has already had a huge impact on staff stress and will negatively impact their work / life balance.

We feel the mass rota changes such as has been communicated are unreasonable, and not in keeping with the 'building better rotas' message that was sent out from the trust. We also believe these sweeping changes will be detrimental to staff welfare and staff retention. We believe they are also unnecessary as we do not have either the staff or vehicles to implement these rotas, and any new rotas built should be gradually and locally implemented as both staff and vehicles become available.

We also believe the mass imposition of a relief element into all rotas negatively impacts staff work / life balance; this is highlighted in the CQC report, and the ZEAL cultural review, so it seems nonsensical that the solution, rather than addressing the issues, is to make everyone work relief shifts.

We are also against the removal of both Ambulances and Rapid Response Vehicles from rural areas; particularly as these resources are often the only one available immediately. We believe the planned reduction of cover from Cromer is not safe and will place our communities at risk.

The recent CQC report has highlighted that we are not a well led organisation, with a lack of openness and staff engagement cited, whilst staff described low moral, feeling tired and unappreciated. Given the strength of feeling expressed by staff on the issue of rotas it does not appear this situation will improve if the process is allowed to continue and staff concerns are not addressed.

We are asking you as our Chief Executive and the Accountable Officer for our Ambulance Service to:

- Acknowledge this letter.
- Recognise the need to genuinely better support your staff and immediately halt this rota redesign project.
- To agree to add on new rotas when staff/vehicles become available and for existing rotas to be exempt from this process, unless staff led changes are requested.
- To remove the mandatory relief imposition from new rotas.
- To commit to no reduction in rural ambulance or RRV cover.
- To urgently look at putting an emphasis on staff welfare and work / life balance.

Our staff were found to provide outstanding care to our patients in the recent CQC report and we deserve better support from our leadership.

We await your carefully considered response.

Kind regards