

### The saga of EGS – a briefing prepared for HOSC

In 2011, following concerns expressed by one or more GPs regarding laparoscopic cholecystectomies performed at the Horton, OUHT held an internal enquiry as a result of which all emergency LCs were transferred to the JR. This decision was not reported to CPN at the time or otherwise made public. Any controversy was therefore limited to within the Surgical Division but nevertheless OUHT felt it necessary to invite the Royal College of Surgeons to carry out a review. Their report, which supported the decision but was critical of several aspects of management, was received by the Trust in December 2012 but only released with multiple redactions the following August, despite numerous requests including from the OCCG. It was only then apparent that the RCS brief had specifically concerned LCs and had no relevance to the wider question of Emergency General Surgery. Similarly the concerns expressed by GPs related only to laparoscopic cholecystectomies and this problem was dealt with nearly two years ago. We are informed that no concerns have been raised about any other aspect of emergency general surgery.

Nevertheless, OUHT had been planning the removal of all EGS from the Horton for some time and had been having discussions with the CCG as long ago as mid 2012, well before the RCS visit took place.

These plans were not reported to the CPN until a sudden and never adequately explained loss of surgeons from the Horton rota in mid January 2013 forced the immediate suspension of the Horton service. It was only then, at an emergency meeting of CPN, that it was revealed that this was merely the bringing forward of a long planned change. It was made clear in statements by OUHT that there was no intention of restoring the service at the Horton.

At the January meeting it was promised that OUHT would hold a formal three month consultation starting in March but this was then postponed until after the local elections. Later it was announced it would be a consultation held jointly with OCCG. Next it was postponed until December at the request of OCCG and it now appears that it will not be a specific consultation on the transfer of EGS but merely form part of a general review by OCCG of all services countywide.

This is in stark contrast to the pattern in 2006, when the Trust planned significant changes to the Paediatric and Maternity services. On that occasion it was played "according to the book", with an initial publication of the plans which were then presented at a public meeting. This was followed by a formal 3 month consultation during which all interested parties including the public were able to express their opinions.

It has to be asked why the same has not been done with this major change of service. It appears that the Trust has used the sudden collapse of the surgical rota in January in an opportunistic manner to impose its plans without going through the usual processes.

We would therefore ask the HOSC to consider the matter urgently with a view to ensuring that rather than this fait accompli being accepted, the Trust is obliged to respect the proper procedures as promised in the NHS Constitution.

"You have the right to be involved, directly or through representatives, in the planning of healthcare services, the development and consideration of proposals for changes in the way those services are provided, and in decisions to be made affecting the operation of those services".