

GMB warns about 'disastrous' patient transport privatisation



GMB has warned against the 'disastrous privatisation of Sussex non-emergency patient transport.

The union is calling on Sussex CCG to publically commit to keeping Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) with current NHS provider.

Concern is growing commissioners are set to award a five-year contract to the private sector.

GMB, the union for ambulance workers, is convinced patients and ambulance staff alike would reject a return to the privatisation fiasco of the Coperforma years.



The union will campaign for South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) to continue their good work of rebuilding the contract and patient service delivery confidence levels, since the CCG's attempted failed privatisation in 2016 / 2017.

Adam Doyle, CEO of Sussex STP, could settle the uncertainty, trepidation and feeling of deja vu for patients and staff with a clear commitment to SCAS.



Initial discussions with GMB suggested the CCG's were willing to keep the provision with SCAS. But with multitude of private providers turn up at the CCG's PTS procurement announcement event, worries are growing a 'cheap as chips' mentality will take precedence over patient safety and satisfaction,

Gary Palmer, GMB Regional Organiser, said:

"Why do Sussex CCG want to make the same disastrous mistakes again?"

"During the Coperforma years patients were uncollected and missed or were late for vital oncology and renal appointments, leading to stress and health complications for them and their families.

"Hospitals were even forced to make their own arrangement to discharge patients.

"Meanwhile GMB members working for the PTS desperately tried to deliver a service whilst often unpaid - out forking for fuel from their own pockets just to stay on the road, having vehicles repossessed as they worked and finding their pensions unpaid and stolen.

"Despite the CCG's apparent desire to do so, GMB cannot accept a return to the private fiasco of the Coperforma years.





“GMB have seen SCAS and its GMB members and front line staff work incredibly hard to get this contract back from the point of collapse to where it should be.

“Service Performance levels and Patient satisfaction figures are now excellent, using SCAS as the provider is enabling public money to stay within the NHS and not be syphoned off into the pockets of shareholders for some private profiteers.

“You usually only get one chance when selling off the family silver, our problem is after all the hard work by everyone else to re-burnish the Sussex PTS silver, the CCG’s want to try to sell it off once more,

“It’s up to GMB and the people of Sussex to say it’s ours and that’s how it must stay.

“GMB and its members working within the NEPTS service will mobilise to keep it that way if required, holding all those in Sussex CCG’s accountable for poor decision-making.”

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