

To: All Members of the Health Liaison Panel

Dear Councillor,

HEALTH LIAISON PANEL - THURSDAY, 21ST NOVEMBER, 2024 , Council Chamber - Epsom Town Hall

Please find attached the following document(s) for the meeting of the Health Liaison Panel to be held on Thursday, 21st November, 2024.

5. **GESH LETTER ON INTERSTITIAL LUNG DISEASE** (Pages 3 - 4)

The Panel shall receive, note and discuss a letter provided by St George's Epsom and St Helier (GESH) University Hospitals and Health Group, regarding the care of patients with Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD) at St Helier hospital.

The late item has been published further to the Chair of the Health Liaison Panel being of the opinion that it should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with Appendix 5, CPR 3.7 of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Constitution, and s.100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

For further information, please contact democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk or tel: 01372 732000

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive

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St George's, Epsom and St Helier
University Hospitals and Health Group
Blackshaw Road
London
SW17 0QT

Email: gesh.comms@stgeorges.nhs.uk

Date: 06 November 2024

Dear Stakeholder,

I am writing to you to share some information with you regarding the care of patients with Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD) at St Helier hospital.

ILD is a lung disease which is progressive and often severe, and most of our patients had a form of the disease (called Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis) for which, sadly, the average survival after diagnosis is only 3-3.5 years.

I am sorry to inform you that it has become apparent that some of our patients with ILD have not been looked after in the best way.

National guidance on the best way to look after people with ILD has evolved over the years, and unfortunately the care that our patients with ILD received from one of the consultant respiratory doctors did not always keep up with this evolving best practice.

I would like to reassure you, however, that we have now looked carefully at the notes and current treatment of all our patients with ILD who might have been affected by this over the last five years.

We have now contacted every patient who might need a change or a correction of their treatment, explaining the issue and offering them an apology. These patients have now been seen by us in outpatient appointments (either face-to-face or virtually) to make sure that they are now receiving the right care and treatment.

We hope our patients received any information they wanted when we saw them in outpatients but if any patient still has concerns, they have been advised they can contact one of our advice lines on 020 8296 2401 or 01372 735293.

We have taken this issue extremely seriously and have already made a number of changes to make sure it cannot happen again. We have also arranged for an independent panel of experts, appointed by the Royal College of Physicians, to look into what happened and to make any further recommendations.

We have also shared details of this issue, including the measures we are taking to strengthen our safeguards for patients, with the Care Quality Commission, the South West London Integrated Care Board and NHS England, as well as with other key stakeholders.

We know that health care organisations around the world are safest when they are open and transparent about things that have gone wrong. This issue of Interstitial Lung Disease has been discussed in detail in recent months at the Quality Sub-Committee of our Group Board, and also at Group Board meetings in private, but now that we have reached the stage of having informed all our patients of the situation, it is important that the Group Board receives a paper and discusses the issue in its meeting in public, and this will happen on Thursday 07 November.

You can view the paper, which will be published on Thursday morning, using [this link](#).

I can understand that you may have questions and I would be very happy to arrange a conversation with you to help answer these. If you would like to, please get in touch by emailing our communications team at: gesh.comms@stgeorges.nhs.uk.

I apologise that our care for people with ILD fell short of what it should have been, and I thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Richard Jennings
Group Chief Medical Officer