

untenable. Several staff also informed us that they had taken early retirement rather than move to the new facility therefore exasperating the burden even further.

Many of the complaints that have been forthcoming in Blaenau Gwent are in terms of provision and servicing of the upper Valleys, with the distance to the Grange and inadequate & poor road systems proving to be an impediment for the population of this area. Additional conversations have taken place with constituents, staff and members from bordering areas that have equal concern, such as those based in Monmouthshire and Brecon, which also saw complaints in terms of service and distance along with difficult country road access. One complaint highlighted an Ambulance journey from Abergavenny to the Grange, which saw an inability to access the quickest route due to rural flooding at Llanover. This resulted in a forty-minute detour, one that could have had dire ramifications if the nature of the journey had been more serious.

Additional complaints included:

- Another pre-Christmas incident reported to one of the Borough Councillors involved a Doctor calling 999 for a patient in their late 70's at 10.30am, with an Ambulance turning up at 7.40pm. The driver then explaining that they had been gridlocked at the Grange with 17 other Ambulances while a patient was in the back during most of that period due to the sole A&E at the GUH being overwhelmed with general accidents.
- Staff expressed concern that the A&E department was overwhelmed by Tuesday on the first week of opening, with Ambulances dispatched to other areas. This has followed suit with between fourteen and seventeen ambulances parked outside gridlocked in the weeks following. One gentleman who had travelled from the Pandy area never even entered accident and emergency but, was treated in the Ambulance prior to being taken back home.
- Dragon Taxis being called by Hospital staff to pick up patients as there were no Ambulances available.
- A senior Doctor confided in a member of the Borough Council stating 'that the only way in which an Ambulance would attend a home with any urgency is if the ailment is cardiac arrest based.
- Wards closed in existing hospitals due to lack of staff
- Other complaints referred have included local staff regretting the move or putting in requests to move back to their original bases.