NHS
South Central Ambulance Service
NHS Foundation Trust

20 July 2026

Hythe station – follow-up from 5 June meeting

Dear Sir Julian, Cllr Wade

Thank you for the discussions on 5 June 2026. I believe we had a positive conversation and hopefully we provided assurances that we are committed to delivering the best possible service to the populations we serve. I hope the visit to our southern Emergency Operations Centre was beneficial and offered you useful insights into how ambulances are dispatched and how our service is delivered across Hampshire. I would like to apologise for the delay in responding, as promised below are the key points of discussion and our commitments from the meeting.

Commitment to a Hythe stand-by point

As stated in our earlier response, under all options for the future we commit to retaining a standby point in the Hythe area. This is an on-going commitment recognising our need for a network of standby points across our entire area. We recognise the need for considering the rural population across the New Forest and the areas of the Waterside corridor and maintaining an effective network of stations and stand-by points to serve our Southampton and West Hampshire sector.

Piloting an alternative stand-by point before irreversible action to current Hythe station

In the first instance, if the current Hythe ambulance station stops being a base location for staff, we will retain it as the Hythe area standby point. This would allow us to review a live analysis of any impacts, including any change to response times, from moving to a standby point model. As discussed, we will share the findings with you.

If collaboration with Hampshire Fire and Rescue offers the opportunity to use the Hythe Fire Station, or if an alternative site were considered, as the long-term option for a standby point we would run a pilot from the proposed location before making final commitments on selling the current Hythe ambulance station site.

Final decisions and local engagement

Beyond a pilot phase we recognise the need for wider engagement to provide information about any final decisions on the future of Hythe ambulance station. We will ensure there is clear information available to ensure the population of Hythe and the Waterside understand the model of delivery going forward and have an opportunity to submit comments. We are happy to arrange follow up meetings with yourselves as the pilot and options development progresses.

Working with partners on traffic management during A326 roadworks

We recognise the concerns yourselves and local residents have about the impact of the A326 improvement works. We commit to ensuring there is close partnership working on the traffic management plan. We will explore with partners if the Local Resilience Forum should take a lead on reviewing the traffic management plans. This is routine practice for major works and ensures all emergency services are jointly involved and that the contractors carrying out the work have workable options in place for emergency access at all times.

Raising awareness of defibrillator access and volunteer responders

As discussed, promoting the installation of local public access defibrillators is something we do across our entire area. There are important in all areas whether rural or urban and we would be keen to work with you to promote the installation of more units across the New Forest. We will also review the availability of community first responders in the area and the potential recruitment of more volunteers.

Yours sincerely

Mark Ainsworth
Executive Director of Operations
South Central Ambulance Service