

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 JULY 2016

TEMPORARY EMERGENCY CHANGE TO PAEDIATRIC INPATIENT SERVICES AT THE ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL (REDDITCH) FROM SEPTEMBER 2016

Summary

1. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is to receive an update from Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (WAHT) on the recent announcement of emergency temporary change to Paediatric Inpatient Services at the Alexandra Hospital (Redditch) from September 2016.
2. The Interim Chairman and Interim Chief Executive have been invited to attend the meeting.

Background

3. The HOSC has requested regular updates on the quality of acute hospital services – as part of its role to monitor the impact of ongoing pressures experienced by many hospital trusts, such as increased activity, greater complexity of patient needs and financial constraints. Within Worcestershire, a further pressure has been the delay in finalising a reconfiguration of acute hospital services, which has resulted in an on-going period of uncertainty for the Trust.
4. Additionally, the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) most recent (December 2015) inspection report led to the Trust being placed into special measures as a result of the planned inspection in July 2015. Key issues from the inspection report centred on:
 - Outpatient Strategy
 - Women and Children's Services
 - High Dependency Unit Review Emergency Surgery Reconfiguration
 - Governance and Safety
5. The main findings of the inspection, and progress in hand to address improvement required (the Patient Care Improvement Plan) were discussed with the HOSC on 9 December 2015 and 27 April 2016.
6. The Trust's previous updates to the HOSC have focused on key achievements to date, priority work streams and plans.

Temporary Emergency Changes to Services

7. On 30 June 2016, the Trust announced emergency temporary change to Paediatric Inpatient Services – the transfer of the inpatient paediatric service from the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch, to Worcestershire Royal Hospital from September

2016. A statement from the Interim Chief Executive, including 'Question and Answer' information was circulated to HOSC members.

8. The decision was made on patient safety grounds by the Trust, under emergency powers. Where the relevant NHS body or health service commissioner believes that a decision has to be taken without allowing time for consultation because of a risk to safety or welfare of patients or staff (this might for example cover the situation where a ward needs to close immediately because of a viral outbreak) – in such cases the NHS body or health service provider must notify the local authority that consultation will not take place and the reason for this¹.

9. However, during previous discussions with the Trust, HOSC members have expressed concern about the extension of the earlier temporary emergency changes (to maternity, neonatal and gynaecology services), and the need for formal consultation with HOSC and the wider public. In October 2015 the Trust announced changes which would centralise births at Worcestershire Royal Hospital (Worcester). HOSC members were concerned that extended temporary changes had been made without formal consultation with HOSC and the wider public.

10. During the 27 April 2016 discussion, the Interim Chief Executive explained that the situation regarding maternity, neonatal and gynaecology services was being kept under review, however he did not foresee an end to the staff shortages for this sector, which had been flagged up as part of updates to HOSC. It was regrettable to be in a position of having to make service changes on safety grounds, but this was precisely the reason for the long journey to review acute services in Worcestershire.

11. The Trust had powers to make temporary changes because of urgent clinical need, and had consulted internally with staff. The transition was reported to have been well ordered and feedback from patients and families was complimentary.

12. Going forward, the Trust continued to actively recruit staff and manage clear communications. It was also confirmed that consultation would take place.

13. HOSC members will be aware that aspects of both Children's' and Women's services form part of the changes proposed in the new clinical model for acute hospital services in Worcestershire – an update, including plans for consultation, is included elsewhere in this Agenda.

Purpose of Meeting

14. Members are invited to consider and comment on the recent announcement of temporary emergency change to paediatric inpatient services at the Alexandra Hospital (Redditch) from September 2016.

15. Following the discussion, HOSC Members are asked to consider whether any further information is required and identify any specific elements for potential future scrutiny.

¹ Local Authority Health Scrutiny – Guidance to support Local Authorities and their partners to deliver effective health scrutiny (Department of Health June 2014)

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and Minutes of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 September and 9 December 2015, and 27 April 2016:
<http://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteId=141>
- Press releases from Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust on temporary emergency changes to paediatric inpatient services:
<http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/services-a-z/childrens-services/emergency-changes-to-paediatric-services-fags/>
<http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/news/emergency-changes-scheduled-to-paediatric-services/>
- Press releases from Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust on temporary emergency changes to maternity, neonatal and gynaecology services August 2015 to February 2016:
 - <http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/news/temporary-relocation-of-emergency-gynaecology-services/>
 - <http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/news/temporary-relocation-of-emergency-gynaecology-services-from-alex/>
 - <http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/news/temporary-emergency-changes-to-services-to-remain-in-place/>
- Care Quality Commission Press release, 2 December 2015
<http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/news/care-quality-commission-report/>
- Care Quality Commission report on Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust (December 2015)
<http://www.cqc.org.uk/provider/RWP#sthash.mEq4ofel.dpuf>