

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 MARCH 2022

SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REPORT ON AMBULANCE HOSPITAL HANDOVER DELAYS

Summary

1. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is to consider and approve the draft Scrutiny Task Group Report on Ambulance Hospital Handover Delays, and future monitoring of improvements/the issues involved.
2. This scrutiny was carried out on 18 November 2021 by a Task Group of HOSC Members, who met with representatives from West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust (WMAS), Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and Worcestershire County Council
3. Representatives from the above organisations have been invited to attend the meeting to provide initial feedback on progress to date on ambulance hospital handover delays and urgent care pressures, as well as feedback on the Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations.

Reasons for the Scrutiny

4. Ambulance hospital handover delays at Worcestershire hospitals was identified as an area for further scrutiny following the attendance of Ambulance Service representatives at a meeting of the Committee in October 2021. The HOSC agreed to look further into the issue of significant ongoing ambulance handover delays to gain a better understanding of the situation and in view of escalating concerns in Worcestershire but also nationally.
5. It was agreed that a Task Group (not in public) of the Committee would be appropriate with system partners around the table, so that Councillors could understand the complexities of the issue from each organisation involved, gather evidence and ultimately report back to partners.
6. The draft Report at Appendix 1 encapsulates the findings and outcomes of that discussion.

Outcomes

7. The scrutiny discussion looked at the problems involved, what was being done to improve the situation and what more was needed. The main areas of the discussion with health and social care partners were around patient flow, the challenge of preventing people coming into the Emergency Department who did not require emergency care but alternative pathways, timely discharge of medically fit patients

from acute hospital settings, assessments being completed in a community (rather than an acute hospital) setting, and workforce pressures.

8. The Report recommends an update to the HOSC in May 2022, and makes a number of recommendations concerning:

- Discharge of medically fit patients by 10am
- Further resources to facilitate patient discharge
- Signposting to appropriate services from the Emergency Department Front door
- Patient assessments
- Monitoring the impact of the 2-hour Community Response Service on Ambulance Handovers
- Monitoring the fragility of the care sector Workforce
- Continuous learning from best practice and what is working elsewhere
- Healthwatch Worcestershire work on urgent care and the Emergency Department
- Education awareness relating to the night-time economy.

Purpose of the Meeting

9. HOSC Members are invited to consider, comment and approve the draft scrutiny report before it is submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 23 March 2022 for discussion (and subsequently to the Cabinet on 24 March), and agree:

- whether any further information or scrutiny work is required at this time
- arrangements and frequency of future monitoring of the pressures on urgent care including ambulance hospital handover delays
- whether there are any comments to highlight to the relevant Health Partners or the Council's relevant Cabinet Member with Responsibility.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Draft Scrutiny Task Group Report: Ambulance Hospital Handover Delays

Contact Points

Emma James / Jo Weston, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, Tel: 01905 844964 / 844965
Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) 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 18 October 2021, 27 June 2019, 14 March 2018 and 11 January 2017

All Papers are available on the Council's website: [Weblink to all agendas and minutes](#)