

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 23 MARCH 2022

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REPORT ON AMBULANCE HOSPITAL HANDOVER DELAYS

Summary

1. The Board is asked to consider the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) Scrutiny Task Group Report on Ambulance Hospital Handover Delays. The Chairman of HOSC will present the Report and also provide an update on the recent HOSC discussion of the progress made since November 2021.

Background

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. The Report (attached at Appendix 1) has been shared with all system colleagues to check for factual accuracy purposes and the feedback received indicated that it was an accurate reflection of the discussion.
4. At a recent meeting of HOSC (9 March), an update on the progress made was discussed.

Reasons for the Scrutiny

5. 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 HOSC 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.
6. 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.
7. The Task Group Report encapsulates the findings and outcomes of that discussion.

Outcomes

8. 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.

9. The Report recommends a further 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.

Progress

10. The HOSC was pleased to note at its meeting on 9 March that since this matter was last discussed in November 2021 at the Scrutiny Task Group, ambulance handovers and patient flow through the Alexandra Hospital, Redditch had improved significantly, however work in these areas continued at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital and remained an area of significant concern for HOSC.

Purpose of the Meeting

11. The Board is invited to consider the scrutiny report, the update on progress provided by the Chairman of HOSC and agree:

- whether any further information or scrutiny work is required at this time
- whether there are any comments to highlight to the relevant Health Partners or the Council's relevant Cabinet Member with Responsibility (as appropriate).

Supporting Information

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

Contact Points

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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 10 March 2022, 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](#)