

Minutes of the meeting of the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Monday 29 July 2024 at 2.00 pm

Committee members present in person and voting: **Councillors: Polly Andrews (Vice-Chairperson), Jenny Bartlett, Simeon Cole, Pauline Crockett (Chairperson), Dave Davies, Louis Stark and Richard Thomas**

Others in attendance:

J Barnes	Chief Transformation and Delivery Officer	Wye Valley NHS Trust
B Baugh	Democratic Services Officer	Herefordshire Council
C Carmichael	Director of Public Health	Herefordshire Council
H Doyle	Service Director - All Age Commissioning	Herefordshire Council
L Flanagan	Chief Nursing Officer	Wye Valley NHS Trust
Councillor C Gandy	Cabinet Member Adults, Health and Wellbeing	Herefordshire Council
H Hall	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing	Herefordshire Council
J Haycock	Head of Adult Social Care Operations	Herefordshire Council
Dr Mike Hearne	Managing Director	Herefordshire General Practice
J Ives	Managing Director	Wye Valley NHS Trust
H Merricks-Murgatroyd	Democratic Services Officer	Herefordshire Council
A Rees-Glinos	Governance Support Assistant	Herefordshire Council
D Vickers	Director of Planning and Delivery	Taurus Healthcare
D Webb	Statutory Scrutiny Officer	Herefordshire Council

[Link to the meeting page, including the video for each agenda item](#)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mark Dykes.

Apologies were also noted from Christine Price, Healthwatch Herefordshire.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Louis Stark was present as the named substitute for Councillor Mark Dykes.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A document containing a question received from a member of the public and the response given, plus a supplementary question and the response given, is attached at Appendix 1 to the minutes: [Link to Appendix 1](#).

6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No questions had been received from councillors.

7. CARE QUALITY COMMISSION INSPECTION OF THE COUNTY HOSPITAL

The committee considered a report on the background and findings of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection of Wye Valley NHS Trust (WVT), The County Hospital: [Link to the inspection report](#).

The slide pack was published as part of agenda: [Link to the presentation 'Care Quality Commission Inspection: Emergency Department'](#). The slides presented by WVT representatives are outlined below (in italics), with summaries of the responses provided to the key lines of questioning by the committee.

A The Managing Director (WVT) introduced the presentation and welcomed the opportunity to update the committee on progress since the publication of the inspection report. The committee was advised that: emergency demand had increased nationally since the Covid pandemic; the principal issue for the County Hospital was congestion in the Emergency Department (ED), this being the result of increased demand, discharge delay, and prioritisation given to offloading ambulances; and recent data (29 July 2024) showed the ED as being in the top quartile of performance nationally on 'time to treatment', and mortality indices were below the national average.

B The Chief Transformation and Delivery Officer (WVT) presented:

Emergency Department: Overview

b.1 Clarifications were provided about attendance types and conveyances.

Emergency Department: Care Groups

b.2 Questions were asked about the inconsistent use of colours in the graphs.

b.3 It was noted that the slide pack had been updated following the postponement of the 28 May 2024 meeting, [Link to the original presentation](#).

Minors by Herefordshire PCN (Primary Care Network)

b.4 It was considered unlikely that the ambulance service would dispatch a crew to attend a minor injury or illness; a 'hear and treat' approach triaged and directed callers to self-care, pharmacy or other services. Examples were provided of scenarios where crews would respond but which might not result in conveyances to hospital, by providing care on-scene or through the deployment of different health resources.

- b.5 The committee was advised that people with complex needs were driving the pressures in the ED, rather than those with minor injuries and illnesses; over 90% of minors were treated and discharged within four hours.

Emergency Department: Acuity

Emergency Department: Performance

Discharge Delays

- b.6 It was reported that: a dashboard was being developed to combine health and social care data; there were significant discharge problems relating to Powys; and the Community Wellbeing Directorate was working jointly with WVT to reduce pressures in Herefordshire.

Acute Bed Occupancy

- C Chief Nursing Officer (WVT) presented:

Care Quality Commission

- c.1 An overview was provided of the roles and background of the inspection team and their advisors.

CQC findings requiring urgent attention

- c.2 The Chairperson outlined a personal experience involving triage at reception. The Chief Nursing Officer explained that, given congestion and the findings of the inspection, the ED had returned to nurse led triage and risk assessment.

CQC safety summit – Friday 8th December

ED Dashboard

- c.3 It was reported that the dashboard provided the nurse in charge with a 'helicopter view' of the whole department to help manage risks and safety; the information system behind it contained additional details about patients.
- c.4 The Chairperson suggested that visual indicators to highlight tests undertaken or pending could help to speed up patient flow in the 'pitstop' area.

CQC ratings – Emergency Department

- c.5 The Managing Director explained that WVT had known that the ED was in difficulty and had been working hard to address congestion, but the situation had deteriorated between October and December 2023. The committee was advised that the CQC findings were considered fair.
- c.6 It was reported that: recruitment of nursing staff into the ED was generally good but it was acknowledged that the skill mix was more junior than it used to be; and a business case was being developed to increase the number of accident and emergency consultants from five to ten.

CQC report – what we did well

CQC report – what we need to improve

- c.7 It was considered notable that only four actions ‘the service must take to improve’ had been identified in the final report, reflecting the progress that had been made between the initial dates of inspection (5 December to 7 December 2023) and the re-visit (20 December 2023).

Where are we now

- c.8 The Managing Director said that the inspection report had added value to the organisation, as it provided the opportunity to pause and reflect on the redesign work being undertaken. It was emphasised that WVT had a programme of review and audit of all its services.

- D The Chief Transformation and Delivery Officer presented:

Wider Strategy

- d.1 Further details were provided about the Community Integrated Response Hub, including referral pathways and how local health and care services were working collaboratively to coordinate urgent and longer-term support for people at home.
- d.2 It was confirmed that community nursing continued to play a significant role in a range of treatments to avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital.
- d.3 The Managing Director commented on resourcing issues, particularly given the challenges of rural sparsity, and how this reinforced the need to work in partnership to achieve best value. It was noted that further investment was needed in preventative and community care in order to reduce demand on emergency departments but this would require new funding and it would take time.
- d.4 With reference made to the Herefordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2033, including the two core priorities ‘best start in life for children’ and ‘good mental wellbeing throughout life’, it was noted that an underpinning objective was to provide people with the right care, at the right place, at the right time: [Link to the Herefordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2033](#). It was also noted that national policies and priorities would also drive how resources were received and allocated.

The principal points of the subsequent discussion included:

- i. Comments were made about the potential of partnership working on prevention programmes to reduce pressures in the ED.
- ii. In response to a comment about challenges in primary care, it was reported that Herefordshire general practice was in the top quartile nationally in terms of patient experience and access to appointments.
- iii. Committee members expressed opinions about the need to consider the reinstatement of minor injury units (MIUs) in the county. The Managing Director advised that a review of minor injury units was underway across the NHS

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System footprint but there had been no change in minors' activity at the hospital following the closure of the MIUs.

- iv. A committee member noted that the original presentation for the May meeting showed minors' activity over a longer time frame (April 2015 to April 2024) than the updated presentation (April 2019 to June 2024), and this showed higher levels of activity prior to the Covid pandemic, particularly during the summer months. It was commented that the MIUs were missed by local people, and some travelled to MIUs in neighbouring counties. It was suggested that the reinstatement of MIUs should be revisited, especially in view of the congestion issues in the ED.
- v. In response to a question about a hypothetical further inspection, the Chief Nursing Officer said that audits provided assurance that significant improvements had been made and were being sustained; it was reported that a 'deep dive' would be undertaken at a Quality Committee in August 2024.
- vi. The Chairperson noted that the government was reviewing the effectiveness of health and social care regulation, with a report expected in autumn 2024.
- vii. The Vice-Chairperson welcomed the fact that, despite the apparent problems, the ED had never closed.
- viii. With attention drawn to Appendix 3 'Overview of integrated working between Adult Social Care and Wye Valley NHS Trust', comments were made about the strength of partnership working within the Herefordshire system by the Corporate Director Community Wellbeing and by the Cabinet Member Adults, Health and Wellbeing.
- ix. The Corporate Director Community Wellbeing said that work was ongoing with Powys in terms of discharge issues, but consideration could be given to raising matters through the Marches Forward Partnership.
- x. In response to questions, the Chief Nursing Officer: clarified the arrangements for nurses to undertake mandatory training; confirmed that a revised way of monitoring the cleanliness within departments had been introduced; commented on the need to communicate outcomes to staff members who reported incidents; provided an overview of internal governance processes to review risks; and outlined the enhancements being made to the food and drink offer.

There was a short adjournment to enable committee members to consider potential recommendations. The meeting recommenced, the draft recommendations were read out by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, and the following resolution was agreed by the committee.

Resolved:

- 1. That the Wye Valley NHS Trust report back to the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the outcomes of its work to review service performance to ensure patient safety and outcomes;**
- 2. That the Wye Valley NHS Trust consider the reintroduction of the Minor Injury Units to the market town community hospitals to alleviate the workload that is currently being experienced in the only emergency department in Herefordshire; and**
- 3. That the committee receive a briefing on the Integrated Care Board work to review Minor Injuries Units within the board and to report their findings to a future meeting of the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.**

8. PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE GENERAL PRACTICE OUT OF HOURS SERVICE IN HEREFORD

The committee considered a report on the proposed relocation of the general practice (GP) out of hours service for Herefordshire.

The slide pack was published as part of Supplement 1 to the agenda: [Link to the presentation 'Consideration of the proposed move of GP Out of Hours Service'](#). The Director of Planning and Delivery (Taurus Healthcare) identified the following principal points:

- i. Feedback was invited from the committee on the proposed relocation of the service from the Station Medical Centre, Station Approach, Hereford to the Nelson Building, Whitecross Road, Hereford.
- ii. The service operated 6.30 pm to 8.00 am on weekdays and 24 hours at weekends, and it was accessed through the NHS non-emergency line on 111.
- iii. The Nelson Building was considered a good, central location and dedicated patient parking would be provided.
- iv. The proposal would consolidate the estate and provided the opportunity to co-locate the Community Integrated Response Hub to support the urgent care system.
- v. The facility would also provide additional clinical space during the day.
- vi. A public consultation had been undertaken by Healthwatch Herefordshire, with the majority of respondents indicating that the proposal would make 'no difference' to accessibility and convenience, and the recommendations from the consultation would inform design considerations.

The Chairperson noted that the public consultation report was comprehensive and many of the concerns that had been raised had been mitigated: [Link to Healthwatch Herefordshire's report 'Public Consultation on Urgent Out of Hours GP Service'](#).

In response to a question, the Managing Director (Taurus Healthcare) outlined the challenges at Station Medical Centre and, whilst acknowledging the need to control, considered that the proposed move would deliver operational and financial efficiency, especially given the limited space available to health services currently.

The following resolution was agreed by the committee.

Resolved:

- a. **That the presentation be noted; and**
- b. **That the proposals be endorsed.**

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer presented the draft work programme for the remainder of the municipal year 2024/25, with attention drawn to the following matters:

- Cabinet had invited engagement from the scrutiny committees on the action plan for the Herefordshire All Age Carers Strategy 2024-2029; [Link to Cabinet minutes](#),

18 July 2024. It was recommended that terms of reference for a working group be developed, in consultation with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Management Board, to enable the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to lead on this piece of work.

- Informal briefings would be arranged to enhance understanding of topics within the remit of the committee, including on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, community transport, and technology enabled living.
- Work was ongoing with officers in the Community Wellbeing Directorate to facilitate informal discussions between committee members and care providers.

The committee discussed potential additions to the work programme, including:

- The intention of the Scrutiny Management Board to examine options for budget scrutiny on elements which fell within the remit of each scrutiny committee.
- A future item on West Midlands Ambulance Service.
- The timing for the further report by the Wye Valley NHS Trust on the outcomes of its work to review service performance to ensure patient safety and outcomes.
- The timing for a report on the results of the review of Talk Community.

Resolved:

That the work programme, as amended and subject to periodical reviews, be agreed as the basis of the primary focus for the committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2024/25.

10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted, [Thursday 3 October 2024, 2.00 pm](#).

The meeting ended at 4.44 pm

Chairperson

Item 5, Questions from members of the public

Questioner:	Phil Smart, Hereford
<p>Question:</p> <p>How can the committee do its scrutiny effectively when so many different sectors are all lumped together under one umbrella?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Almost every aspect of the council’s work involves close partnership working, including our public health and social care duties. These often complex working arrangements are themselves a valid and necessary topic for scrutiny.</p> <p>The committee recognises the challenge this faces, and is producing a comprehensive programme of briefings and training in order to develop its understanding of the numerous organisations that deliver health and social care services. This matter will be a topic for discussion at the committee’s meeting on 29 July 2024.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>It is clear there is a desperate need for a separate Housing and Homelessness scrutiny committee given the recent ruling from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman where a family was awarded £13,580 in compensation for being placed in unsuitable accommodation. Will the committee recommend to Council that it create such a committee?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>The committee discussed your suggestion at a briefing earlier today and we recognise the importance of providing a high standard of accommodation for people in Herefordshire, in particular those who are homeless, as well as those for other vulnerable groups. We believe that this committee is well placed to scrutinise the council’s work in this area, so we will not make a recommendation to Council for a scrutiny committee dedicated to housing and homelessness. We welcome any further suggestions you might have for topics for this committee to look into.</p>	

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