

RESPONSE BY THE PRIMARY CARE TRUST AND WEST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST

Councillor K. Swinburne
Chair. Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee
c/o

16 March 2009

Dear Kay,

Scrutiny Review of West Midlands Ambulance Service In Herefordshire

I refer to your letter of the 26th February which enclosed a copy of the above report which was considered by HOSC at the meeting in February. If you recall you requested that I consider the detailed recommendations and to forward a response to the points raised. The responses detailed below have been collated with input from the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WMAS) since we thought it helpful to provide a comprehensive response from the health community rather than the HOSC receive separate responses from both the PCT and Ambulance Trusts. Herefordshire Hospital Trust we understand will be however writing to you separately to address any issues from the County Hospital perspective.

For ease of review we thought it helpful to frame our responses in the same order of your detailed recommendations, as detailed below:

Resources

- 1 WMAS regularly reviews resources allocated to localities within the regional structure. The achievement of performance standards and maintenance of appropriate resource Unit Hour Utilisation are the drivers for resource level determination. The Independent Review that has been commissioned jointly with the West Midlands PCTs is intended to identify the resource level needed to service the Model of Care agreed by the regional ambulance service commissioning group.
- 2 The Malvern and Ledbury stations offer mutual support in times of high demand for service as part of the region wide arrangements for support. In terms of ambulance resource, the West Midlands PCTs are collectively requesting WMAS to act as a Regional resource to ensure reliance given peaks in demand therefore the ambulance resource to meet a call to respond could effectively be deployed from anywhere and therefore would not be able to agree to ring fence Herefordshire resources.
- 3 Ledbury currently has cover on station as follows:

Ambulance: 08.30 – 18.30 hours
Car: 09.00 – 21.00 hours

WMAS have agreed to model how these hours may be altered to provide additional cover, however it is unlikely that a 24 hour resource could be re modelled from the current resources in Ledbury or indeed transferred from other areas within the county.

The Review may identify more appropriate locations for any extra resource identified – this may dependent on the response model and integral rostering and System Status Management rules.

4. WMAS currently provide (via contract funding) training, drugs, some protective clothing and basic kit to Community First Responders (CFR). WMAS have agreed to review what further support may be offered.
5. WMAS are currently advertising for a CFR manager to lead on support and training and recruitment of CFRs. in Herefordshire, where previously the CFR manager provided support for both Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The CFR scheme now is managed and directed at a regional level.
6. Both PCT and WMAS are in agreement with this recommendation. The issue will be addressed as part of the imminent independent review.
7. The PTS service for Herefordshire has recently been subject to a tendering process with the contact now awarded to an independent contractor Patient First. Further details of the tendering process and the new contract are available on request, however the new provider will be providing the service from the 1st May 2009. Herefordshire LINK is aware of this development and will receive a full briefing on the new service from commissioners shortly.

Pressures on the service

1. The ambulance delay target against which this is measured is 15 minutes rather than 30 minutes as stated in the report. WMAS and the commissioners have agreed to keep this matter under review but current data suggests that this is less of an issue in Herefordshire than in other parts of the West Midlands.
2. The PCT are in agreement with this recommendation. WMAS will work with HHT and the out of hours provider (Primecare) to both review

- procedures and agree enhanced arrangements for the handling of category C calls.
3. The PCT are in agreement with this recommendation and will press for this issue to be considered as part of the independent review. WMAS will work with the Welsh Ambulance Service to better understand present cross-border flows.
 4. The PCT will provide the requested information on the out of hours service but would request further detail from the review group as to what is required. A new telephone number for the out of hours service has been sourced and will be widely publicised across the county in the coming weeks.
 5. Please see 4 above.
 6. Significant progress has already been made on greater collaboration with the other emergency within the locality as a whole. Shropshire have arrangements to share all the Fire Services station to enhance strategic standby and are also working with the police on a similar basis. In Herefordshire good progress has been made with Hereford fire station being utilised for standby and Herefordshire police using a shared facility for vehicle maintenance and repairs. As the Ambulance service currently provides station facility's all large conurbations within the county progress would be through the long term estate strategy.
 7. WMAS have agreed to provide this information. There is currently no evidence to suggest that there is any resource "drift" from the locality to other parts of the West Midlands. Current figures would suggest that the local service is supported more by resources from Birmingham than the locality supports Birmingham.

Data and information

1. Some outcome measures (eg: thrombolysis, ROSC and FAST tests are already available). The development of Models of Care work will deliver further quality measures as part of the 2009/10 regional contract. A copy of the contract will be supplied when finalised.
2. WMAS will provide this data.
3. All targets are defined by the Department of Health (DoH) and stipulated within a national mandated contract. It is not possible to agree further targets for rural Herefordshire without DoH agreement which is unlikely to be forthcoming.

4. A new computer aided dispatch (CAD) is being introduced shortly into the Ambulance control centre at Millennium Point. The Herefordshire locality has been chosen to introduce these changes first due the experience of the current staff on a similar system which was used at Bransford. If helpful the WMAS have suggested the HOSC could view these changes once fully installed and get a full understanding of the system and technology available.
5. The PCT will take forward this campaign via the Public Health team. Funding has already been provided to the 'Heart Start' campaign.
6. Computer patient report forms have been introduced in the Coventry and Warwickshire locality. The system is currently being evaluated and a roll out of this system is likely in the near future.
7. Please see 3 above. With the introduction of electronic patient records the capturing of clinical outcomes should be considerably more comprehensive and provide data quicker and more reliable than current methods.
8. These recommendations will be taken forward via the co-location of the out of hours service along with the new GP led equitable access centre for the Hereford City with the potential development of a clinical decisions unit at HHT.

I would hope the above will provide sufficient detail to the HOSC committee of the proposed actions following receipt of the report but should more detail be required I am sure PCT officers in attendance at HOSC or colleagues from WMAS, can provide further clarity.

Yours sincerely,

Mr C. Bull
Chief Executive

c.c Dr Akeem Ali
Paul Ryan
Paul Edwards