

MEETING:	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	18 MAY 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	TASK & FINISH GROUP REPORT – REVIEW OF THE WEST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS INTEGRATED PATHWAYS AND MAKE READY SYSTEM IN HEREFORDSHIRE
REPORT BY:	Task & Finish Group

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the findings arising from the Task & Finish Review into the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Recommendation(s)

THAT: the Committee notes the report of the Task & Finish Group – Review of the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Integrated Pathways and Make Ready System in Herefordshire.

Key Points Summary

- A half day scrutiny Task & Finish Review has been undertaken into the performance of the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust in Herefordshire.
- The scope of the Review Group was limited to the consideration of the performance of the NHS Integrated Pathways and Make Ready System in Herefordshire. The principal conclusion from the Review is that there were no major concerns with the two aspects of the Ambulance Service in Herefordshire. There are therefore no recommendations to the Executive from this report.

Alternative Options

- 1 There are no alternative options.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 On the 5 March 2012 This Committee commissioned a half day Task & Finish Group to look at the performance of the NHS Integrated Pathways and Make Ready System operated by the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust in Herefordshire. The Task & Finish Group has completed its task and its report is required to be submitted to this Committee for approval.

Introduction and Findings

- 3 On the 5 March 2012 This Committee commissioned a Task & Finish Group to look at the performance of the NHS Integrated Pathways and Make Ready System operated by the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust in Herefordshire. The Group was chaired by Councillor JW Millar, and comprised Councillors P Bettington and WLS Bowen.
- 4 The Group interviewed Mr Mark Gough (Service Delivery Director – Operations) and Mr Paul Musticone (Director of Services, NHS Pathways, Birmingham and Solihull Cluster) who informed the Group that the NHS Integrated Pathways were a suite of clinical assessment tools for triaging telephone calls from the public, based on the symptoms they report when they call. Structured symptom based pathways determined the clinical skills required, and the timeframe in which they must be accessed. As an assessment progressed, the system collected 'Markers' that identified if a particular clinical skill would be required to treat the patient. This mapped the call against a record of clinical skills in primary care services local to the patient using the integrated Directory of Services, which enabled the call handler to offer the caller details of a service local to the patient. There were 700 services on the Directory, ranging from GPs, to pharmacies and dentists.

The following areas were highlighted:

- That the Services was aiming to meet a target of 6% of all calls at a Hear and Treat level, which meant that the Ambulance was stopped at source, and the patient routed elsewhere, and 8% of See and Treat, which meant that the patient was sent to the appropriate care within 24 hours. Herefordshire was not meeting this, and current performance was at 4%. Consideration was being given to reconfiguring faulty pathways whilst also looking at how to improve the See and Treat figures.
 - that the Category A (75% of calls reached within eight minutes) response times for Bromyard had improved from 76% to 93% since the introduction of the Pathways and Make Ready System which were supported by the Community Paramedic Scheme that was in place in the town.
 - that the Service would not stop using the response times as a measure of performance, and that these would be combined with clinical indicators.
- 5 The Group interviewed Ms Debbie Small (West Mercia Assistant Area Manager) and Mr Mark Gough on the Make Ready system that had gone live in Herefordshire on the 2 April 2012. The Make Ready programme was a quality assurance vehicle and equipment preparation programme designed to improve efficiencies across the whole spectrum of Ambulance Operations, and involved the creation of 24/7 fleet maintenance hubs where a dedicated team of Ambulance Fleet Assistants prepare, service and maintain the fleet of ambulances. Oncoming ambulance crews collect their 'made-ready' vehicle and go to Community Ambulance Stations from where they respond to 999 calls.

The aim of the hubs was to cut down on ambulance crew downtime; time when the crew are dealing with issues such as cleaning their vehicle or restocking. Make Ready also significantly reduced waste with a reduction in of out-of-date drugs and supplies. It also reduces spending on aged and expensive ambulance station buildings.

The following areas were highlighted:

- The new system meant that the down time that had occurred for an ambulance whilst it was checked and cleaned was now being used, as the crew could go on shift and be in a position to take a vehicle out within twenty minutes.
- that the Bromyard Community Paramedic Scheme had been going for 8 months, and transit times had been reduced to 51%. The same scheme in Ledbury was now manned on a 24 hour, seven day a week basis, and acted as a 'virtual' ambulance station, as all the Community Ambulance Stations in the market towns would, with the ambulances themselves based in Hereford.
- that apart from Kington, where the ambulance would be based in the newly built medical centre, the vehicles would co-locate with other emergency services in market towns.
- That Community paramedics would be able to assess and give medication for cardiac arrests and stroke cases. There were a higher number of Advanced Paramedics in Herefordshire than elsewhere in the region. Training would be undertaken on a rolling basis, and would be offered in the County after other areas in the West Midlands had undertaken the necessary training to implement the system in the same way that Herefordshire had. A wholesale review of resources was underway combined with a forecast of demand for the Service. The restructuring of annual leave and rotas meant that there was a saving of 0.5 of a post on each ambulance.

Following the meeting the Group visited the Make Ready Ambulance Station in Hereford.

Key Considerations

- 6 The Task & Finish Group considered the range of information put before it and its principal finding was that the performance of the NHS Integrated Pathways and Make Ready System in Herefordshire was acceptable.

Community Impact

- 7 The Review links to the priority in the Corporate Plan of improving health care and social care and the long term outcome of improved intervention and support for older people and keeping them safe.

Equality and Human Rights

- 8 There is no change to the Equality Analysis of the Council as result of the report.

Financial Implications

- 9 There are no financial outcomes as a result of the report.

Legal Implications

- 10 There are no legal outcomes as a result of the report.

Risk Management

- 11 There is no reputational risk to the Council as a result of this report.

Consultees

- 12 As part of the Review interviews were held with Mr Mark Gough (Service Delivery Director – Operations), Ms Debbie Small (West Mercia Assistant Area Manager) and Mr Paul Musticone (Director of Services, NHS Pathways, Birmingham and Solihull Cluster)

Appendices

- 13 None

Background Papers

- 14 None.