

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Adults and wellbeing scrutiny committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>13 January 2020</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Minor injury units</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Democratic services</b>

## Classification

Open

## Decision type

This is not an executive decision

## Wards affected

(All wards); specifically for the temporary winter closures of the minor injury units: Kerne Bridge, Leominster East, Leominster North and Rural, Leominster South, Leominster West, Ross East, Ross North, and Ross West.

## Purpose and summary

To consider the temporary winter closures of the Ross-on-Wye and Leominster minor injury units (MIUs), in the context of urgent and emergency care, and to determine any recommendations the committee wishes to make to a responsible NHS body and / or to the executive.

## Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **the adults and wellbeing scrutiny committee consider the report of NHS Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group on urgent and emergency care to determine any recommendations it wishes to make.**

## Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options to the recommendations as it is a function of the committee to review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service within its area. The committee also has the function to make recommendations to a responsible NHS body on any NHS matter it has reviewed or

scrutinised, and to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive.

## Key considerations

2. The adults and wellbeing scrutiny committee has statutory health scrutiny powers including the review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning provision and operation of health services (not reserved to the children and young people scrutiny committee) affecting the area and to make reports and recommendations on these matters.
3. On 15 October 2019, Wye Valley NHS Trust (WVT) issued a press release [‘Temporary winter closure for Ross and Leominster Minor Injury Units’](#) as follows:

‘The Minor Injury Units at Ross and Leominster community hospitals are to close temporarily during the winter to help Wye Valley NHS Trust provide safe services to seriously ill patients needing urgent care at Hereford County Hospital.

This mirrors last year’s decision and has been made as part of a planned strategy to help the Trust cope with winter pressures.

The temporary MIU closures will allow hospital bosses to redeploy experienced emergency nurse practitioners to provide enhanced support where it is clinically most needed – caring for seriously sick patients needing urgent care at Hereford County Hospital.

“These extra staff will make a real difference,” said Jon Barnes, Chief operating officer at the Trust.

The Emergency Department regularly sees more than 200 patients a day. During the last 12 months the Trust has seen 60,560 patients in the Emergency Department – an increase of 5,000 compared to 12 months ago.

The Trust’s main concern is the safety of patients with acute and emergency conditions ensuring that they are assessed, diagnosed and treated rapidly

“We have a duty to provide safe and timely care to our patients - this decision will help us achieve that,” added Jon.

The Minor Injury Units will close for the winter period from Monday, November 4. All other services at Ross and Leominster community hospitals will continue as normal.

The Trust is reminding people that they should ring NHS 111, contact their GP practice or visit a local pharmacy for advice relating to minor injuries or ailments.’

4. During consideration of the committee’s work programme at its meeting on 18 October 2019, the committee determined that it wished to undertake a review of the temporary winter closures of the MIUs, for the following reasons:
  - a. It was considered to have a significant impact, principally for residents in Leominster and Ross-on-Wye.

- b. There was limited supporting information to explain and/or justify the temporary closures.
  - c. It was recognised that the temporary winter closures sit within a wider context of urgent and emergency care within the county and the committee was keen to explore how any planned reforms could impact on the MIUs.
5. The agenda item was scheduled for November 2019 but was deferred subsequently due to the parliamentary pre-election period.
6. The committee is likely to explore how the urgent care system operates currently, the planned or potential reforms, and the implications for the MIUs, including:
  - How the MIUs function and the numbers of patients using this service (within the county or adjacent counties)
  - The skillset of the staff who work within the MIUs and the transferability of those skills from an MIU to an Accident and Emergency (A&E) setting (during the closures)
  - Examination of the pressures in the 'system' that are being alleviated (e.g. in A&E) and the pressures are being created (e.g. for General Practitioner (GP) surgeries) as a result of the temporary closures
  - How patients' interests / healthcare outcomes are being maintained or improved as a result of the temporary closures
  - The governance and evidence taken into account to determine urgent and emergency care reforms, and the factors and evidence taken into account to justify the temporary closures
  - The consultation undertaken on the temporary closures and the future consultation being planned
  - The care pathways used to prioritise patient care - in terms of those treated in an MIU setting, those prioritised for urgent care administered through A&E, and those being treated by GP surgeries
  - Examination of the 'preventable' measures designed to reduce the need for patients to visit MIUs and/or urgent and emergency care facilities
  - Examination of the healthcare 'estate' and what impact the reforms may have on this
  - The future outlook for the MIUs in the county, including the prospects for further temporary or permanent closures, in the context of reforms and the NHS Long Term Plan
  - How any future changes can deliver better outcomes for patients in Herefordshire and surrounding areas
7. The CCG has provided the attached report on urgent and emergency care for consideration by the committee. The CCG's acting director of operations will give a brief presentation and will respond to member questions at the meeting.

## Community impact

8. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining, the right mix of these is an important strategic choice to make sure outcomes are achieved. The council needs robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure its outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best use of resources whilst still enabling efficient and effective operations and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review.
9. This review contributes to the corporate plan objective 'enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives'.
10. Within the NHS, there has been increasing emphasis on the need to understand and respond to the views of patients and the public about health and health services. Responding positively to health scrutiny is one way for the NHS to be accountable to local communities.

## Equality duty

11. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
10. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. All Herefordshire Council members are trained and aware of their Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality considerations are taken into account when serving on committees.

## Resource implications

11. The costs of the work of the committee will have to be met within existing resources. It should be noted the costs of running scrutiny will be subject to an assessment to support appropriate processes.

## Legal implications

12. Section 9FA of and Schedule A1 to the Local Government Act 2000, Regulations 5 and 11 of the Local Authorities (committee system) (England) Regulations 2012 and Regulation 30 of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and wellbeing boards and Health Scrutiny)

Regulations 2013 make provision for local scrutiny functions to review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the area.

13. The remit of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 3, section 4.5 of the constitution and the role of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 2, section 2.6.5 of the constitution. The council is required to deliver a scrutiny function.

## **Risk management**

14. None in relation to this report; scrutiny is a key element of accountable decision making and may make recommendations to certain NHS bodies with a view to strengthening mitigation of any risks associated with the proposed decisions. The committee may make reports and recommendations to certain NHS bodies and expect a response within 28 days.

## **Consultees**

15. This item was added to the committee's work programme due to the concerns expressed by councillors representing the communities affected. The local ward members will be invited to contribute to the discussion at this meeting.
16. Members of the public are also able to influence the scrutiny work programme by suggesting a topic for scrutiny or by asking a question at a public meeting, for further details, please see the 'get involved' section of the council's website:

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved)

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Urgent and Emergency Care Report

Appendix 1.1 A&E Delivery Board Performance Dashboard

Appendix 2 Presentation slides

## **Background papers**

None identified.