

## Health and Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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**Date of Meeting:** 07 November 2019

**Report Title:** Performance Update by North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NWAS)

**Senior Officer:** Roger Jones, Sector Manager and Jane Clayton, Advanced Paramedic (Cheshire and Merseyside)

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report provides the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the performance of the 999 emergency ambulance service for the Cheshire East Council area against national standards.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Health and Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive and note the contents of the report.

### 3. Background

- 3.1. The Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a 12 month performance update following the trust's previous report which was presented to Committee in November 2018.

- 3.2. The national ambulance response standards (targets) are as follows:

Category	Description	Response Time
Category 1	Time critical life-threatening injuries and illnesses which require immediate intervention e.g. cardiac arrest, serious allergic reaction, airway obstruction, ineffective / abnormal breathing.	7 minutes on average (mean) for all responses & 90% in 15 minutes

Category 2	Emergencies which require rapid assessment, urgent on scene intervention or urgent transport e.g. heart attack, epilepsy, stroke, sepsis, major burns.	18 minutes on average (mean) for all responses & 90% in 40 minutes
Category 3	Urgent problems which require treatment to relieve suffering e.g. burns, diabetic and hypoglycaemic episodes, abdominal pain, injuries and drugs overdose.	60 minutes mean for all responses and 90% in 120 minutes
Category 4	Problems which are not urgent but need assessment in person or over the phone.	90% in 180 minutes

#### 4. Performance

- 4.1.** For the purposes of this report, NWS has provided the average (mean) performance against each of the standards for each month/year below. These are incidents which have originated from within the Cheshire East Council Locality Area.
- 4.2.** When the trust shared performance data with the Committee last year, it was still facing the challenge of implementation of new national ambulance response programme standards (ARP) introduced in August 2017. The data in this report shows how the trust has progressed since that time and therefore reflects the period August 2017 to September 2019.
- 4.3.** The new standards require ambulance services respond to all patients in a timely manner as opposed to the historical standards which focused mainly on the most life threatening calls. NWS focused on both the life-threatening categories and the lower acuity calls in ensuring all patients receive the right response at the right time, in the right place, every time.
- 4.4.** The new standards have been challenging and whilst NWS performed very well initially in responding to the lower priority calls, a very challenging winter meant that some higher acuity emergencies were waiting longer for a response than they should.

	C1 Mean	C2 Mean	C3 Mean	C4 Mean
<b>2017</b>	<b>00:10:08</b>	<b>00:24:06</b>	<b>00:42:56</b>	<b>01:25:12</b>
August	00:09:25	00:19:39	00:30:44	01:25:06
September	00:10:06	00:21:32	00:40:33	01:22:40
October	00:10:02	00:21:51	00:41:58	01:15:03
November	00:09:27	00:24:05	00:41:32	01:28:13
December	00:11:03	00:30:41	00:56:55	01:34:19
<b>2018</b>	<b>00:08:55</b>	<b>00:22:32</b>	<b>00:52:41</b>	<b>01:33:36</b>
January	00:09:40	00:29:09	01:07:46	01:47:59
February	00:08:26	00:26:25	00:55:32	01:43:22
March	00:08:14	00:25:45	00:54:27	01:27:59

April	00:08:03	00:20:37	00:43:12	01:33:20
May	00:08:35	00:20:37	00:44:37	01:36:27
June	00:09:29	00:20:42	00:49:57	01:31:43
July	00:09:31	00:21:47	00:52:00	01:38:42
August	00:09:24	00:22:24	00:53:40	01:26:03
September	00:09:26	00:19:12	00:47:07	01:23:57
October	00:09:07	00:20:47	00:48:15	01:20:15
November	00:08:42	00:21:05	00:58:49	01:28:02
December	00:08:26	00:21:18	00:57:56	01:41:17
<b>2019</b>	<b>00:08:37</b>	<b>00:21:13</b>	<b>00:58:53</b>	<b>01:36:05</b>
January	00:09:13	00:26:17	01:19:25	01:51:21
February	00:09:22	00:23:41	00:58:08	01:36:02
March	00:08:42	00:20:13	00:54:57	01:26:06
April	00:08:44	00:22:07	01:01:44	01:32:42
May	00:08:18	00:17:52	00:47:23	01:31:06
June	00:08:16	00:19:15	00:48:13	01:38:44
July	00:08:18	00:20:16	00:59:25	01:40:58
August	00:08:25	00:21:08	01:02:38	01:34:37
September	00:08:26	00:19:57	00:55:31	01:29:49
<b>Overall</b>	<b>00:09:01</b>	<b>00:22:21</b>	<b>00:52:58</b>	<b>01:33:12</b>

## 5. Performance Improvement Plan

- 5.1. In order to improve the performance position, commissioners of the ambulance service requested the trust develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) in January 2018.
- 5.2. The trust worked with an external agency who undertook an audit of frontline resources to understand current and future demand challenges, current and future resource requirements and the changes to the operational model required to support the delivery of the ARP.
- 5.3. The PIP was developed taking into account the recommendations from the external agency and with the support of the trust's commissioners. This included a phased changeover of front line resources to support the current and future workload. A reduction in the ratio of Rapid Response Vehicles (RRVs) to Double Crewed Ambulances (DCAs) was required to allow the correct vehicle to be sent to the patient first time.
- 5.4. NWS received additional investment from commissioners and the changes to the operational fleet were undertaken during late summer 2018.

- 5.5.** The PIP also looked at additional internal efficiencies such as recruitment and retention of staff, review of skill mix and the introduction of clinicians into the Emergency Operations Centres (EOC). Additional training has been provided to clinicians assessing patients to allow increased opportunities for Hear and Treat (telephone advice and referral) and See and Treat (face to face assessment and referral). Work continues to look at and review processes for call handling including working with BT to benchmark 999 call answering performance and introducing additional processes within the EOC to allow earlier identification of the most serious and life threatening calls.

## **6. Improving care**

- 6.1.** In 2017, the trust launched its Transforming Patient Care programme with the aim of improving outcomes for patients. There was particular focus on treating more people on scene (see and treat) or on the telephone (hear and treat) where clinically appropriate and, in turn, to reduce the number of people taken to hospital – avoiding unnecessary trip to A&E and keeping emergency resources free to respond quickly to life-threatening incidents.
- 6.2.** Despite the number of incidents dealt with by NWS increasing year on year, the transformation programme saw a reduction in hospital conveyances for the first time ever (38,824 fewer patients transported in 2018/19 than the previous year) which freed up ambulance time and made financial efficiencies of £7.3million.
- 6.3.** Highlights from Transforming Patient Care include:
- The introduction of new clinical roles in NWS' contact centres to provide support over the phone to staff and patients.
  - Rotational working was introduced for clinicians to enhance their skills in different working environments.
  - Training for emergency medical technicians was rolled out to enable them to utilise more appropriate outcomes for patients following assessment.
  - A single phone number for healthcare professionals to request ambulance transport was launched.
  - The introduction of a signposting service for patient transport crews concerned about a patient's wellbeing was rolled out.
- 6.4.** The work of the Transforming Patient Care programme concluded in 2019 but has informed the new Urgent and Emergency Care strategy which outlines how NWS will continue to develop services and initiatives with the aim of ensuring people receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place; every time.

## 7. Key Factors Affecting Performance

- 7.1. Managing Hospital handover is an ongoing challenge for the trust. The target for ambulance handover at hospital is 15 minutes, but unfortunately in some trusts, it often can take much longer, and resulting delays do have a huge impact on NWAS' ability to respond to patients waiting in the community; while ambulance crews are waiting to handover at hospital, they are unavailable to dispatchers looking to allocate the next waiting 999 call.
- 7.2. During the last year the trust has worked with 6 hospitals in a collaborative venture aimed at improving hospital handover times. A quality improvement approach has been taken with resultant improvements being seen in hospital handover times, benefiting both patients and the trust's ability to respond to other patients. This work is continuing and has been extended to include 14 hospitals.
- 7.3. For consistency purposes the data below shows the hospital turnaround times for the Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Leighton) and East Cheshire NHS Trust (Macclesfield) Emergency Departments for the same reporting period i.e. between August 2017 and September 2019.

Cheshire East Activity and Performance		
Time between arrival at hospital to handover of patient		
Month	Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Leighton)	East Cheshire NHS Trust (Macclesfield)
	Handover Time	Handover Time
Aug-17	00:14:27	00:17:54
Sep-17	00:15:27	00:18:46
Oct-17	00:16:09	00:17:04
Nov-17	00:16:29	00:18:27
Dec-17	00:16:45	00:21:48
Jan-18	00:17:56	00:20:41
Feb-18	00:17:54	00:22:18
Mar-18	00:20:54	00:21:29
Apr-18	00:17:42	00:18:58
May-18	00:17:00	00:18:56
Jun-18	00:18:48	00:18:06
Jul-18	00:19:27	00:19:18
Aug-18	00:17:43	00:18:56
Sep-18	00:19:01	00:18:40
Oct-18	00:19:10	00:20:20
Nov-18	00:19:12	00:19:46
Dec-18	00:19:15	00:19:25
Jan-19	00:20:22	00:21:03
Feb-19	00:20:02	00:20:55
Mar-19	00:19:45	00:20:14

Apr-19	00:18:37	00:19:11
May-19	00:18:01	00:20:13
Jun-19	00:18:41	00:19:43
Jul-19	00:17:40	00:20:52
Aug-19	00:18:52	00:21:01
Sep-19	00:18:42	00:19:58
<b>Overall</b>	<b>00:18:11</b>	<b>00:19:47</b>

**7.4.** Like all NHS trusts, NWAS is required to deliver services against a tightening financial position. Every year it is required to identify in-year efficiency savings (£9.834 million in 18/19 and £9.808 in 19/20) as part of a Cost Improvement Programme.

**7.5.** NWAS continues to experience recruitment and retention challenges. Again this is common throughout the NHS as particularly with paramedics, there is a limited market for suitably qualified staff and NWAS are competing with other ambulance trusts and other private and public sector healthcare providers nationally to attract candidates from this pool. The recruitment of other trained clinicians such as nurses is also challenging and the trust has had to adopt innovative approaches to ensure it has sufficient staff to deliver services safely and to a high quality.

**7.6.** New approaches have included partnership working with universities and Health Education England and more use of social media and international recruitment. In addition, the trust has strengthened its clinical leadership structure to enable staff to develop and progress.

## **8. Additional information**

### **8.1. Trust strategy launch**

8.1.1. The trust launched its 2019-2024 strategy on 22 October 2019 which has eight areas of focus that have become our priorities: integrated urgent and emergency care; quality; digital; workforce; stakeholder relationships; infrastructure; environment, and business and commercial development.

8.1.2. As the only provider organisation that covers the whole region 365 days of the year, 24/7, NWAS plays a central role in the development and improvement of urgent and emergency care services across the North West.

8.1.3. The importance of this is outlined in the NHS Long Term plan which describes how the NHS will move to a new service model in which patients get better support and properly joined-up care at the right time in the right care setting.

8.1.4. This will require collaboration with other healthcare services to make the most of opportunities to treat more patients by telephone, at scene and in community settings, reducing unnecessary journeys to hospital – a better outcome for patients and the whole of the NHS system.

8.1.5. There are challenges in the North West that the strategy takes into consideration; 9 out of the top 20 most deprived local authority areas are in the region, population health is poor with more cases of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and life expectancy being lower than the south and high rates of alcohol and smoking related illnesses.

8.1.6. In Cheshire, NWAS' plans support the priorities of the STP/ICS which the trust is fully engaged with. These priorities are promoting health and wellbeing to reduce reliance on services, developing joined-up models of care outside of hospital and reducing variation in quality and ensuring a clinical and financially sustainable system.

## **8.2. Patient and public panel**

8.2.1. The trust has launched a panel for patients and the public to provide meaningful opportunities for patients/the public to influence service planning and delivery and to develop service improvements using co-production methodology. Members of the public are able to get involved at a level that suits them and their availability.

## **8.3. Community specialist paramedics**

8.3.1. Two of the trust's 10 community specialist paramedics (CSPs) are based in Cheshire East (Knutsford and Crewe). CSPs are a central presence in the communities in which they are based which enables them to provide a more patient-centred approach to healthcare in a way that the ambulance service was unable to provide before the role was introduced in 2015.

8.3.2. Working with GP practices and other health and social care professionals who support local residents, CSPs' duties are to develop and promote alternative treatment pathways, engage with local nursing and residential homes and educate local schoolchildren.

## **8.4. Community engagement**

8.4.1. The trust hosted an engagement event on 14 October 2019 in Northwich where people could learn more about the services we provide in Cheshire and give your feedback. Guests heard from representatives of the three services NWAS provides – emergency/999, NHS 111 and patient transport.

8.4.2. Themes from the event that will be put into an action plan were around raising awareness amongst the public about each of our services and promoting the roles of volunteer community first responders.

## **8.5. Community first responders**

8.5.1. This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the community first responders (CFR) who are ordinary members of the public that respond to life-threatening emergency 999 calls, often arriving before the ambulance. These volunteers are invaluable in rural communities. At a recent event to celebrate the anniversary, three CFRs from Cheshire received 'remarkable responder' awards for their contributions to their communities within the county.

## **9. Contact Information**

9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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