

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL ADULTS WELLBEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **COMMENTS ON NORTH EAST AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST QUALITY ACCOUNT FOR 2021/22**

The Committee welcomes North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) NHS Foundation Trust's Quality Account 2021/22 and the opportunity to provide comment on it. The Committee are mindful of their statutory health scrutiny role and the need to demonstrate a robust mechanism for providing assurance to the residents of County Durham that health service provision is efficient and effective. The quality account process provides the Committee with one such mechanism.

In considering the performance information provided by the trust, members noted that NEAS was the best performing ambulance trust across England and Wales in respect of responsiveness for category 1, 2 and 4 calls which was commendable in view of the system pressures placed upon the health and social care sector during the past year. However, members remain concerned that performance was within national targets for category 1 calls only. In respect of performance across County Durham the committee noted that for category 1 and 2 calls performance is worse than the trust average. This is a major concern given that these represent the most serious and life-threatening incidents and members would welcome information from the trust that details how performance in these areas is to be improved.

Notwithstanding these concerns, members are aware of the impact on performance that handover delays at emergency departments, turn-around times for cleaning of vehicles during the COVID-19 pandemic to prevent cross infection and also the impact of COVID-19 on staff sickness levels have all had.

During consideration of the Quality Account members raised a number of issues for which they would like a response from the trust. These include:-

- the priority given to 999/111 calls made from nursing homes and how this is assessed as there have been concerns raised at the length of time to respond to such calls;
- response times for cardiac 999 calls in rural areas of County Durham and also the incidence of vehicles being out of area which exacerbates lengthy response times to calls from these areas;
- Members of the public and councillors remain concerned at the lengthy response times for 111 calls which often leads to abandoned calls and the patient/caller defaulting to the emergency department which in turn increases pressure within hospital trusts. Members would appreciate

some clarification from the trust on how the proposed Quality Account priorities for 2022/23 will address these issues;

- the presentation given to members referenced the number of “calls offered” and again clarification is needed on what this means in reality. Does this represent the number of calls answered?
- there are several references within the Quality Account to hear and treat plans. The committee would like information on the development opportunities being offered to staff who support the hear and treat service and how this will provide assurance that hear and treat decisions are made safely and appropriately.

The Committee welcome the progress made by the trust against the 2021/22 Quality Account priorities for the management of patients in the EOC; improving cardiac arrest care and end of life care. The trust has highlighted a number of areas where progress has not been able to be delivered including clinicians upgrading peri arrest care, improving the availability of baseline data for hear and treat rates and the provision of a seven-day dedicated transport service for end of life care. The committee would welcome information on how these outstanding issues are to be addressed.

In considering the trust's proposed priorities for 2022/23, members particularly welcome the proposals for addressing and delivering reductions in handover delays and are interested in receiving regular updates against this particular activity in view of the concerns expressed by the committee on this issue. The remaining priorities are supported by the committee although members again would seek clarity on how these priorities would improve the quality of services provided to patients and also ambulance response performance and the effectiveness and timeliness of the 111 service, particularly within County Durham.

Finally, in order to ensure that it continues to provide a robust health scrutiny function and assurances in this respect to the residents of County Durham, the Committee will continue to receive and consider performance overview information. As in previous years, the Committee would request a progress report on delivery of the 2022/23 priorities and performance targets within the Quality Account.

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL ADULTS WELLBEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **COMMENTS ON COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST QUALITY ACCOUNT FOR 2021/22**

The Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomes County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust's Quality Account 2021/22 and the opportunity to provide comment on it. The Committee are mindful of their statutory health scrutiny role and the need to demonstrate a robust mechanism for providing assurance to the residents of County Durham that health service provision is efficient and effective. The quality account process provides the Committee with one such mechanism.

Members have been specifically engaged with the Trust in respect of the healthcare system response to the COVID-19 pandemic; Shotley Bridge Community Hospital; winter planning and the work of the Local Accident and Emergency Delivery Board, the Trust's Do Not Attempt Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) policy and the Sunderland and South Tyneside Path to Excellence Phase 2 programme.

In terms of performance against the 2021/22 priorities the Committee notes that whilst the number of falls across the Trust has increased due to the increase in the number of patients, the incidence of falls per 1000 bed days has reduced at acute and community sites. Members are concerned that the number of falls resulting in moderate or greater harm has increased but note that due to the rapid review process investigations this has identified that falls due to lapses in care have decreased.

During consideration of the Quality Account members raised a number of issues for which they would like a response from the trust. These include:-

- The provision of detailed sepsis data including the identification of patients with symptoms of sepsis, the timeliness of associated tests and the administration of antibiotics in cases where sepsis is suspected or identified. Whilst acknowledging the steps taken by the Trust in managing sepsis performance is still a concern. Training and development for staff and the ability of staff to take decisions early in respect of treating sepsis is considered essential;
- The need for timely and responsive dementia care advice and support for those patients in crisis and their families/carers, particularly those with mental health issues who receive treatment in acute hospital settings;

- Whilst noting the performance within the trust in respect of pressure ulcers against the Trust's zero tolerance approach, members expressed concern that the incidence of pressure ulcers may increase as patients remain reluctant to contact the NHS as they remain concerned at the risks of COVID-19;
- Waiting times in A&E remain a concern and the Committee is pleased to note that this has been identified as a priority for 2022/23. Members would like clarification as to whether this reflects an increase in demand upon the service, an insufficient number of inpatient beds, staffing pressures or the fact that the A&E department is too small to cope with the demand and that planned work to extend the facility at UHND remains outstanding.
- The Committee welcome the priority to embed prompt recognition and action on signs of patient deterioration and the plans to increase staff training for patient deterioration.

The Committee are also pleased that the Trust will continue to retain discharge summaries as a priority moving forward and the planned investment in a new Electronic Patient Register system for 2022/23 which will assist in speeding up the discharge process and also ensure that discharge summaries contain high quality and all relevant and required information.

Reference is made to the work proposed across maternity standards in response to the second Ockenden Inquiry report and members are pleased to see work planned to ensure that staffing across the maternity service remains safe.

Finally, in order to ensure that it continues to provide a robust Health scrutiny function and assurances in this respect to the residents of County Durham, the Committee will continue to engage with the Trust in terms of performance. As in previous years, the Committee would request a progress report on delivery of 2022/23 priorities and performance targets within the Quality Account.

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL ADULTS WELLBEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **COMMENTS ON TEES ESK AND WEAR VALLEYS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST QUALITY ACCOUNT FOR 2021/22**

The Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomes Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust's draft Quality Account 2021/22 and the opportunity to provide comment on it. The Committee are mindful of their statutory health scrutiny role and the need to demonstrate a robust mechanism for providing assurance to the residents of County Durham that health service provision is efficient and effective. The Quality Account process provides the Committee with one such mechanism.

Members have continued to engage with the Trust in respect of the specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the services provided by TEWV particularly regarding the time for referral into services as well as accessing initial and follow up treatments. Additional engagement with the Trust has taken place in respect of the Trust's 2021/22 business plan; Care Quality Commission inspection results and associated improvement action plans; adult mental health rehabilitation and recovery services for County Durham and Darlington provided at Primrose Lodge, Chester-le-Street together with stakeholder engagement feedback.

The Committee considers that the Quality Account is clearly set out and that progress made against 2021/22 priorities is clearly identified. Whilst the Committee expressed concerns at the number of quality metrics that are below target, they noted that the identified targets were stretch targets within the Quality Account. In examining the Trust performance across these metrics the Committee were also concerned at the incidents of physical restraint within County Durham. Whilst it is acknowledged that these related to a small number of acutely unwell patients at Lanchester Road hospital who have extremely complex needs, the Committee would welcome information on how the trust will improve performance in this area.

It is noted that the Trust has identified below target performance in a number of areas due to the ongoing impact of the COVID 19 pandemic specifically in respect of the Trust's ability to reinstate face to face patient consultations and engagement together with the redeployment of frontline staff to deal with infection prevention and support the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

During consideration of the Quality Account members raised a number of issues for which they would like a response from the Trust. These include:-

- Measures to improve the performance of the Trust in ensuring that patients are treated with dignity and respect;

- Members were informed that whilst resources within the Trust are split 50/50 between inpatient and community services, patient numbers receiving services from the Trust are split 10/90 between inpatient and community services respectively. In order for members to have more clarity in respect of this data, the Committee have requested that the Trust provides data for those patients receiving inpatient/community based services across key service areas including CAMHS, Adult Mental Health Services, Older Peoples Mental Health Services and Learning Disabilities/Autism;
- The Trust's plans to address previously reported concerns in respect of transitioning arrangements for service users from CAMHS to Adult Mental Health Services;
- Confirmation of how the Trust will improve performance in terms of the time taken from initial referral into services to subsequent treatment particularly in respect of CAMHS;
- Whilst members noted the value of services being accessible remotely such as the talking changes service, they feel that these are not appropriate for everyone and that face to face appointments should be offered to patients where necessary. The Committee would welcome information on how the availability of face to face appointments is to be increased.

Members remain concerned about the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on mental health within the community, which is likely to result in a further increase in demand upon mental health services and therefore are keen to learn from TEWV as to how they are working with partners across the health and social care system to ensure that service users continue to be supported.

In respect of the proposed Quality Account priorities for 2022/23, the Committee supports them and the associated actions. Members agree with the importance of continued investment in mental health services and welcome the work being undertaken by TEWV in association with local authorities and NHS County Durham CCG and the continued investment in mental health services, particularly in terms of counselling services. The Committee also support the engagement of the community and voluntary sector organisations to deliver mental health support and advice services, whilst acknowledging that this will require resource investment.

Finally, in order to ensure that it continues to provide a robust health scrutiny function and to provide assurances in this respect to the residents of County

Durham, the Committee would request a progress report on delivery of 2022/23 priorities and performance targets.