

Wiltshire Council

Health Select Committee

18 January 2023

Health Select Committee inquiry session: System-wide review of factors contributing to current pressures in urgent care

Purpose

1. To propose a methodology for a committee inquiry session conducting a system-wide review of the factors contributing to the extreme pressures currently being experienced and reported in urgent care, and systemic challenges impacting on patient flow through acute hospitals used by Wiltshire residents.

Background

2. In July 2022, the Committee resolved to have an inquiry session looking at this topic and in November 2022 asked for a report to come to the Committee in January 2023 setting out a more detailed proposal.

Context

3. During the last 8 weeks, extraordinary pressures within the urgent care services have been experienced, including unprecedented waits for ambulance attendance in the most serious categories. The three acute hospitals that service the population of Wiltshire are operating at the highest levels of demand for long periods of time. Similar challenges are also being experienced nationally.
4. People want to know that they will receive urgent medical care quickly and conveniently if they need it. These are reasonable public expectations, and the health and care system must try to balance them with its responsibility to provide safe, high-quality care that makes best use of resources.
5. Following discussion with the Chair of the Committee, the following approach to an Overview and Scrutiny exercise reviewing this issue is presented for discussion by Committee. This would bring together the key sources of evidence to support the Committee's understanding and scrutiny of the broad challenges being experienced across the healthcare system in Wiltshire.

Terms of Reference for the inquiry

6. The Committee will seek to understand the following:

- a) What factors are contributing to the increased demand for urgent care delivered through Acute Hospitals?
- b) What preventative strategies and services could reduce hospital acute care demand and are these in place in Wiltshire?
- c) What is the role of primary care and is there sufficient capacity in terms of GPs in the community?
- d) The most serious emergencies require rapid access to highly specialised skills and equipment. Many less serious cases can be treated safely in community settings, meaning patients do not need to go to hospital. Do we have the resources or a plan to deliver urgent care in community settings at home, and in care homes?
- e) What are patients' priorities when accessing urgent care, and are these understood in the design of urgent care in Wiltshire?
- f) What principles should underpin the design of urgent and emergency care, as well as the key components?
- g) The NHS management approach to the challenges appears largely reactive, with 90% of any management time addressing current urgent situations. Does the lack of focus on admission avoidance and prevention impact the system's ability to change?
- h) Is there an unintended consequence of the No Criteria to reside (NCTR) policy in hospitals and does this drive early discharge and people leaving with complex needs? The NCTR policy was introduced in August 2020 as part of the 'Hospital Discharge Service Policy and Operating Model' to 'ensure that all individuals are discharged from hospital in a safe, appropriate and timely way' NHS England.
- i) Do we have sufficient care home and domiciliary care capacity? If not, why and what are we doing about it?

Stakeholder invitees

- Healthwatch Wiltshire
- Director Ageing and Living Well, Wiltshire Council
- Corporate Director People, Wiltshire Council
- Cabinet Member Social Care, SEND and Inclusion, Wiltshire Council
- Head of resources commissioning/ Director of Commissioning and Procurement, Wiltshire Council
- Chief Executive Wiltshire Health and Care
- Chief Executive Wiltshire Care Partnership
- Carers Support Wiltshire
- Age UK Banes and Wiltshire
- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW Integrated Care Board (ICB) Place Director for Wiltshire
- ICB Director of Commissioning for Wiltshire
- Director of Urgent Care BSW
- Chief Executive leads of urgent care each acute trust Salisbury Foundation Trust, Royal United Hospital and Great Western Hospital

- Dorothy House
- Director of Public Health Wiltshire
- GP representative Dr Nick Ware
- Primary Care representative, BSW ICB
- South West Ambulance Service (SWAST) representative
- CEO Medvivo (providing GP out of hours services in Wiltshire)
- Director of urgent care BSW
- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) representative

Evidence and Timescale

7. The evidence for the inquiry could include:

- a) Data and analysis on demand, activity, variation on standard service and outcomes from urgent care pathways from health and social care.
- b) Anonymised stories of 4 people who have experienced the urgent care system in Wiltshire, what led to the need, what happened, and what was the outcome for them and their family. Stories would be selected by a small panel of people to include service users to demonstrate the majority range of issues, rather than those issues which are an exception. Patient stories to include themes
 - Carer breakdown
 - End of life urgent care
 - Falls
 - Dementia and complex mental health.
- c) Wiltshire benchmark performance on urgent care against similar Counties and nationally.

Format

8. A half-day session with the full committee, involving briefings from stakeholders and Q&A session about each area, which may lead to further scrutiny work.

Proposal

9. Health Select Committee to hold an inquiry session as set out in the report, with arrangements to be made by the Scrutiny team in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and reported back to the Committee's next meeting.

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17 January 2023

Appendices

None.