

Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

15 May 2008

Great Western Ambulance Trust Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Update Report

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee about the first two meetings of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and to outline the work plan for the initial six month period.

Background

2. Following the meeting of the County Council on 18 March 2008 the Wiltshire Health OSC was able to formally take up its place on the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. The three members put forward to represent Wiltshire are Dr English, Mr While and Mrs Winchcombe.
3. The second meeting of the Joint Committee was held at the Council House in Bristol and, with the exception of Bath & North East Somerset, all the Councils within the Great Western Ambulance Trust area were represented.

The Work of the Joint Committee

4. The Joint OSC has focussed initially on the performance of the Ambulance Trust against targets in the three sectors of Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, the impact on the service of high sickness rates and vacancies, and the measures that are being taken to address service delivery issues.
5. The minutes of the previous meetings and the work plan for the Joint Committee are attached for information at Appendices 1, 2 & 3.
6. The focus for the next group of meetings will be on the view of the Unions (who have taken a stance on behalf of their members), the commissioning PCTs across the patch with particular input from Gloucestershire as the lead commissioner, the Strategic Health Authority for the South West, the intentions for ambulance services for the NHS nationally, and the public, through the existing PPI groups and the Local Involvement Networks as they emerge.
7. The Joint Committee is also intending to arrange a number of visits to ambulance stations and the control room to speak to front line staff and see at first hand how the service operates.

8. After this initial run of meetings the Joint Committee will consider its findings and make any appropriate recommendations back to the service providers and commissioners. All the participating Health OSCs will receive the recommendations at this point.
9. The designated representatives for Wiltshire will be responsible for reporting back to the Wiltshire OSC on a regular basis and for taking forward any concerns raised by Wiltshire members.
10. The next meeting of the Joint Committee will take place on 23 May 2008 at Wiltshire County Council and will be open to the public to attend. All members of the Committee are welcome to attend.

Conclusions

11. The Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee is underway and focussing on a range of issues related to performance targets and service delivery.
12. The intention of the Committee is to flush out the reasons for poor performance, discrepancies between the three sectors the Trust works in and to press for improvements.
13. The three members representing the Wiltshire OSC have been appointed and a mechanism for reporting to the Committee established.

Financial Implications

14. There are no financial implications to the County Council beyond those associated with printing of papers for the three representatives and hosting the Joint Committee in turn with the other participating councils.

Recommendations

15. The Committee is asked to note the report and feed any concerns or relevant information to the three Wiltshire representatives.

Stephen Gerrard
Assistant Director, Resources

Report Author
Joanna Howes
Health Scrutiny Officer