

Joint Great Western Ambulance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Draft Terms of Reference

Mission Statement:

To scrutinise the services provided by the Great Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust (the Trust) in the locations covered by the Joint Scrutiny Committee in order to understand the challenges facing the Trust and bring facilitate improvements. To provide a single scrutiny function to deal with strategic developments and consultations on service change.

Problem Statement:

Following the merger of three Trusts covering Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire eighteen months ago, the Great Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust has struggled to achieve target response times in a number of the geographical areas it covers. The individual committees that make up the Joint Scrutiny Committee have all expressed concern that patients are not receiving the level of service they should expect and that too high a percentage of emergency calls are not attended within the national target time, thus potentially affecting patient's chances of survival and recovery.

The performance ratings for the Trust reflect these problems, but the Joint Scrutiny Committee is also concerned that the performance ratings for the commissioning Primary Care Trusts have also suffered.

Legal Framework:

The Local Authority (Overview and Scrutiny Committees Health Scrutiny Functions) Regulations 2002 state in paragraph 7:

"(1) Two or more local authorities may appoint a joint committee (a "joint overview and scrutiny committee") of those authorities and arrange for relevant functions in relation to any (or all) of those authorities to be exercised by the joint committee subject to such terms and conditions as the authorities may consider appropriate."

Centre for Public Scrutiny guidance states that two or more HOSCs may choose to form a discretionary joint committee under s.7 and s.8 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 as part of the power to review and scrutinise issues around the planning and delivery of health services in their area.

Scope:

The joint scrutiny committee, during the course of its review, will:

- Scrutinise the Trusts response at a strategic level to the recent Department of Health report that highlighted a number of areas for concern.

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- Scrutinise the action plan drawn up by the Trust to address the concerns raised in the report.
- Monitor target response times on a Trust wide monthly basis. Performance management information will be circulated to members outside of Joint Committee meetings
- Hear evidence from the Primary Care Trusts, in particular Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust as lead commissioner in order to understand how they set commissioning plans and how they are helping the Trust to improve target times.
- Scrutinise the capacity of the Trust to achieve improvements with existing resources and establish a timeframe for improvement.
- Scrutinise the Trust's engagement with stakeholders, partners and the public in developing proposals for future service provision.
- Make recommendations to the Great Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust and the commissioning Primary Care Trusts accordingly at any point during the scrutiny process.
- Seek the views of the Patient & Public Involvement Forum for Great Western Ambulance Trust, and relevant Local Involvement Networks after 1st April 2008, in relation to its overall performance and service delivery
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Joint Committee on an annual basis in January to identify key outcomes, points of learning, to review the relevance of the Terms of Reference and to determine the future of the Committee. The first review to take place in January 2009.
- All participating local authorities retain the right to refer specific issues to their HOSC for scrutiny. Similarly, all participating HOSCs may scrutinise an issue relating to the Great Western Ambulance Trust without referring it to the Joint Committee but it is good practice to notify the Chair of the Joint Committee or the supporting officers of the issue under review.
- Individual HOSCs may refer an issue to the Joint Committee. The Chair, will determine whether the issue should be presented to the Joint Committee for consideration. The Joint Committee will advise the referring HOSC in writing of action taken in response to the referral, or the reasons why action has not been taken
- If necessary, form the basis of a Statutory Committee, as outlined in the Local Authority (Overview and Scrutiny Committees Health Scrutiny Functions) Regulations 2002, to consider any proposed cross-

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boundary substantial variations in service proposed by the Great Western Ambulance Trust or its commissioners

The joint scrutiny committee will not:

- Scrutinise processes for the management of staff.
- Scrutinise individual patient cases.
- Scrutinise concerns that are area specific, although PCTs will be expected to inform each OSC about performance in their area.
- Scrutinise issues affecting only one local authority area without seeking approval of the relevant HOSC
- Carry out any scrutiny without informing the Chief Executive of the Trust about its intentions.

Specific issues to be addressed:

The mechanisms for improvement, in particular the actions to be taken by the Trust in response to the Department of Health report and monitoring of progress.

Development and consultation on plans to implement new services in order to improve response times and provide modern services to the population.

Timescales for service improvement and resource allocation to enable the Trust to achieve this.

Understanding how the Trust is monitored by the South West Strategic Health Authority and the Healthcare Commission and how it contributes to the process of service improvement.

Desired Outcomes:

The Joint Scrutiny Committee understands and agrees the Great Western Ambulance Trust's plans for performance improvement.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee is able to satisfy itself that the Ambulance Trust is signed up to the commissioning PCTs plans and timetables for strategic change.

Improvements to services are delivered.

A procedure for public consultation on any service changes is agreed.

People Involved:

Each participating local authority will nominate 3 members of their HOSC to sit on the Joint Committee. Substitutes may attend if required.

Further to the agreement of ALL of the participating local authorities, it is proposed that political proportionality is waived.

For more information contact Emma Powell, Scrutiny Officer, Swindon Borough Council on 01793 463412 or epowell@swindon.gov.uk

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The Chair will be appointed at the first meeting of the Joint Committee for a period of 12 months. In the absence of the Chair, a member of the Joint Committee will be appointed to act as Chair. The Chair will not receive a Chair's allowance.

Members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee:

Bristol City Council

Gloucestershire County Council

Swindon Borough Council

Members of the Committees in South Gloucestershire and North Somerset Councils if they agree to participate in the process

A 15 minute public forum will be held at the start of every Joint Committee meeting.

Administrative Support:

Officers supporting the Joint Scrutiny Committee:

Emma Powell – Swindon Borough Council

The support that will be provided to the Committee includes:

- Production of agendas and papers for Joint Committee meetings and briefings
- Circulating Committee paperwork by email to Scrutiny Officers
- Liaison with witnesses providing evidence to the Committee
- Producing minutes for Joint Committee meetings and briefings
- Liaison with host councils regarding the venue and requirements for Joint Committee meetings
- Updating the Chairs of HOSCs not participating in the Joint Committee regarding outcomes of Committee meetings
- Providing a single point of contact for the Trust, PCTs and NHS South West regarding issues within the Terms of Reference of the Committee

This support does NOT include:

- Printing and posting Committee papers and other information to Committee Members. Papers will be sent by email to Scrutiny Officers within participating local authorities and printing and postage costs met by each individual council
- Posting Committee papers on individual local authority websites. This will be the responsibility of each Scrutiny Officer

Swindon Borough Council will meet the cost of supporting the Joint Committee, in terms of officer time.

Timeframe:

It is intended that in the first instance the Joint Scrutiny Committee will meet as often as necessary in order to understand the problems and constraints which have led to the Trust's inability to meet target response times in some areas. This is likely to require meetings every 6 weeks.

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However, Members are agreed that when the current pressures on services are resolved the Committee will meet quarterly with the provision to call extra meetings if required.

Meetings will be rotated across participating councils, with the host council providing a venue for the meeting and providing refreshments. The host will meet the costs of holding the meeting.