



Wiltshire Health Select Committee

Report from South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

Tuesday 11 March 2014

Wiltshire Performance

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) has many performance targets relating to both the quality of clinical care and response times. In terms of response times, Red 1 performance is perhaps the most high profile target for all ambulance services. The overall performance standard for the Trust is to reach 75% of calls categorised as Red 1 or Red 2 within eight minutes.

It is important to note that these performance targets are for the whole Trust and are not recorded or commissioned at individual Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) level.

For South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, the Red 1 target equates to an average of just over 3 calls per day in Wiltshire. This small number of calls, unpredictable in nature and location, mean that achieving the Red 1 performance target is a real challenge for SWASFT. The rural nature of Wiltshire makes this an even greater challenge for the Trust.

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust's performance figures for Wiltshire from April 2013 to January 2014 are attached to this report.

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust is very focused on meeting the eight-minute response target and a range of initiatives have been put in place to help improve our performance in this area. These include the recruitment of Community First Responders and the roll out of public access defibrillators, as well as a number of internal schemes to make more staff available at peak times. Whilst we are seeing some improvements in our performance across the South West, we are still struggling to meet response times in our more rural areas, including Wiltshire.

The Trust continues to review activity and demand across the region as well as the allocation of resources across the Trust. Discussions with our commissioners continue to review demand, activity and performance and we have identified that additional resources are required to meet the level of overall demand in the area. If funded, we are confident this will bring about marked improvements in our response times. However, we recognise



the competing funding priorities facing commissioners and are working to establish how we can best improve performance through the use of the schemes highlighted above.

Staff Training to Reduce Hospital Admissions

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust is committed to reducing the number of patients admitted to hospital. Where appropriate alternative care can be given, either over the telephone, in the patient's home or by a referral to other health or social care services, Trust staff are committed to delivering the right care in the right place at the right time.

Hospital avoidance can be defined as the ability of paramedics (and other clinicians) to treat or refer patients through a care pathway that is more appropriate to their individual needs, rather than simply conveying them to the nearest emergency department. This approach has developed over a number of years and in many ways.

As a result, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust has the lowest conveyance rates in the country, meaning that more patients in the South West are triaged and treated or referred to more appropriate services by one of our staff over the telephone or in their own homes. In turn this helps to reduce the pressure on our hospitals as well as offering better care and a better experience for our patients.

Most paramedics now enter their profession via a university programme at diploma or degree level. University curricula vary, but take account of guidance from the professional body (College of Paramedics) which now includes aspects such as patient assessment and examination and various facets of urgent care provision, rather than just a focus on the traditional aspects of trauma and resuscitation. All universities now teach paramedics to examine patients using the medical model and to utilise alternative care pathways, whilst also managing a much greater number of patients at home using an ever increasing range of medicines and techniques. Paramedics can now be considered as 'first contact practitioners'.

After they graduate and are recruited by SWAST, paramedics are now offered an induction and preceptorship package which allows them to get used to their new place of work. A key component of this is the ability to learn about local multi professional healthcare provision and resources so that they can start to learn about what is available to them in their locality. They are supported in doing so by a range of SWAST line management and support staff, these include Clinical Support Officers, Clinical Quality Leads and Clinical Tutors as well as personal mentors.

Every year, the Trust produces a Training Needs Analysis (TNA), which takes into account a range of elements that are essential to the continued education of staff and which contribute to clinical safety and high quality care. These include locally commissioned quality indicators (CQUINs), learning from serious incidents and feedback from staff. The



TNA informs annual core training. As an example this year we will train staff over two days (face to face) on:

- Clinical decision-making
- Conveyance decisions and identification of appropriate pathways
- Medical models of history taking
- Health records and documentation
- Domestic violence

SWAST is aiming to provide an ever increasing range of Continual Personal Professional Development (CPPD) over and above core training. CPPD takes many forms, from a career development pathway into specialist practice to short courses, sessions and study days. Subjects are extremely diverse and this year we are currently developing a 'shop window' web page: www.learnwithswast.co.uk to provide a portfolio of what is on offer.

Again, CPPD opportunities concentrate on developing clinical skills and educating our health professionals about the wide range of options for a more patient-focused approach to care.

NHS 111

The NHS 111 service in Wiltshire is provided by Harmoni. South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust is working closely with Harmoni to ensure that collaborative working supports a high quality service for patients, particularly those patients that are transferred from NHS 111 to the Trust.

When Harmoni first launched the NHS 111 service in Wiltshire, call volumes and call transfers to South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust were higher than expected. SWASFT worked with Harmoni to assist in the management of these calls and to reduce the number of calls transferred by providing a clinical supervisor in the NHS 111 call centre.

The number of calls transferred from NHS 111 to the ambulance service remains an issue for SWASFT, particularly since the majority of these transfers occur during periods of peak activity, such as weekends.

The Trust has recently attended a very useful meeting with Harmoni, hosted by Gloucestershire CCG, regarding NHS 111 in SWASFT's North Division. All parties are working together to review and agree arrangements for call triage and call transfers.