

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 MARCH 2016

SCRUTINY OF SOUTH EAST COAST AMBULANCE TRUST

Report from: Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults

Author: Rosie Gunstone, Democratic Services Officer

Summary

The attached report is an update to be given to the Committee by the Director of Commissioning, South East Coast Ambulance Trust, on behalf of the Chief Executive.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 the Council may review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in Medway. In carrying out health scrutiny a local authority must invite interested parties to comment and take account of any relevant information available to it, and in particular, relevant information provided to it by a local Healthwatch. The Council has delegated responsibility for discharging this function to this Committee and to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 1.2 The terms of reference for the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Chapter 4 Part 5 paragraph 22.2 (c) of the Constitution) includes powers to review and scrutinise matters relating to the health service in the area including NHS Scrutiny.

2. Background

- 2.1. On 30 October 2015 it was announced that the South East Coast Ambulance Trust were being investigated following the implementation of a pilot project introduced by the Trust to delay sending help for certain 111 calls and transferring them to the 999 system thereby gaining an additional 10 minutes in which to respond.

- 2.2. As part of the pilot from December 2014 to February, the trust transferred some calls between systems to re-assess what type of advice or treatment patients needed and whether an ambulance was really required.
- 2.3. A letter, dated 5 November 2015, from the Chief Executive of the South East Coast Ambulance Trust has since been received following the publication of a review by NHS England into a breach in the conditions of the licence.
- 2.4. A further briefing note was received from SECAMb explaining in more detail the Trust's position with regards to 'stopping the clock' in terms of not dispatching an ambulance if the person requiring medical assistance is within close proximity of a defibrillator.
- 2.5. It was agreed at the 17 December 2015 meeting that initially a letter be sent to the Chief Executive of SECAMb expressing concerns about the pilot but requesting that he attends this meeting to update further on the action plan being developed by the Trust. Unfortunately the Chief Executive was unable to attend. The Director of Commissioning will attend the meeting on his behalf.
- 2.6. Attached to this report is the presentation received in response to the request from this Committee for the Chief Executive of South East Coast Ambulance Trust (SECAMb) to attend which updates the Committee on the conditions imposed on the Trust's licence by the Care Quality Commission on 30 October 2015, the defibrillator policy and the 111 service.

3. Risk Management

- 3.1. There are no specific risk implications for Medway Council arising directly from this report.

4. Legal and Financial Implications

- 4.1. Under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 the Council may review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in Medway. In carrying out health scrutiny a local authority must invite interested parties to comment and take account of any relevant information available to it, and in particular, relevant information provided to it by a local Healthwatch organisation. The Council has delegated responsibility for discharging this function to this Committee and to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the Council's Constitution. The Committee may make reports and recommendations to relevant NHS bodies and health service providers who can be required to respond formally within 28 days of a request for a response.
- 4.2. Recently published Department of Health guidance to support Local Authorities and their partners to deliver effective health scrutiny (published June 2014) emphasises the primary aim of health scrutiny is to strengthen the voice of local people, ensuring that their needs and experiences are considered as an integral part of the commissioning and delivery of health services and that those services are effective and safe.

4.3. The guidance states that local authorities will need to satisfy themselves that they keep open effective channels by which the public can communicate concerns about the quality of NHS and public health services to health scrutiny bodies. In the light of the Francis report local authorities are advised in the guidance to consider ways of independently verifying information provided by relevant NHS bodies and relevant health service providers – for example, by seeking the views of local Healthwatch.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Members are asked to consider and comment on the update.

Background papers: None.

Appendices

- Appendix 1- presentation received from SECAMb

Lead officer:

Rosie Gunstone, Democratic Services Officer
01634 332715
Rosie.gunstone@medway.gov.uk