

Response to South East Coast Ambulance Trust (SECamb) Quality Account on behalf of Medway Council's Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Acting Chief Executive of SECamb attended the Committee in November 2016 to provide an update on the Trust's improvement journey following the publication of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection findings in September 2016, which had given the Trust an overall rating of inadequate. The Committee was advised that the Trust had been placed in special measures as a result.

SECamb recognised its shortcomings and was delivering a Recovery Plan, which it was anticipated would address the issues that been identified by the CQC. The Plan had been submitted to NHS Improvement and had been endorsed by the CQC. The Trust would be re-inspected within six months. The Acting Chief Executive considered that a realistic target was for this to give the Trust a rating of 'requires improvement.' The expectation was that SECamb would be able to come out of special measures within 12 months. It was noted that the Trust had agreed an overall budget deficit of £7.1 million. SECamb's contract for the current year only provided 75% of what was considered to be the required level of funding for red 1 responses and 70% of the required level for red 2 responses. The presentation given to the Committee also acknowledged concerns about the ability of services to manage winter pressures.

The Committee was informed that a Patient Impact Review published in relation to a Red 3 Pilot had found no evidence of patient harm which could be attributed to the pilot.

The Acting Chief Executive of SECamb considered that the Trust had got into difficulties due to it having focused on innovation, as opposed to getting the day job right, although a Member of the Committee was not convinced that there had been significant innovation.

Committee Members were concerned about the high staff turnover and retention at SECamb and the low rate of staff appraisal completions. The Committee was assured that steps were being taken to address these issues, although staff retention was likely to remain problematic for the foreseeable future. Bullying and harassment of staff was also raised as a concern, with the Acting Chief Executive acknowledging the issue.

The Committee noted that some statistics presented a more encouraging picture of service provision. These included relatively low patient conveyancing rates (50%) and patient satisfaction levels of over 90%

General Comments:

- The Committee notes that SECamb is due to be re-inspected during May 2017 and anticipates that this will show that measures are being put in place as part of SECAMB's Improvement Plan to address its inadequate rating and concerns raised by the previous inspection and by Committee Members, such as staff retention and the Trust's financial situation. The Committee is concerned that the percentage of staff who have experienced harassment, bullying or abuse had increased in 2016 compared to 2015.
- The Committee is also particularly concerned that safety has been rated as inadequate, both overall and for the NHS 111 service and that only 65.1% of

red 1 responses reached the patient within eight minutes, compared to the Department for Health requirement of 75%.

- The Committee is supportive of the Sub-Group, established by the South East Regional Health Scrutiny Network to undertake scrutiny of SECamb and to support its improvement journey. However, the Committee wishes to emphasise that it does not see the Sub-Group as a replacement for scrutiny of SECamb undertaken by individual local authority health scrutiny committees and looks forward to SECamb attending the Committee once again in June 2017 and subsequently during 2017/18.
- The Committee relies on Healthwatch Medway, which is a non-voting committee member, to feed back patient views and experiences.

Councillor David Wildey, Chairman of Medway Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2016-17

This response to the Quality Account has been submitted by officers, in consultation with the Committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson, under delegation from the Medway Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.