



meeting	JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
date	24 June 2008	agenda item number

Report of the Chair of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

Patient Transport Service

East Midlands Ambulance Service

Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust

Purpose of the report

1. To allow the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee to receive information on the operation and commissioning of the Patient Transport Service (PTS) and to consider further areas for review.

Background

2. The Joint City and County Health Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising decisions made by NHS organisations, together with other issues, which impact upon the conurbation of Greater Nottingham. Much of the Committee's work is focused on major projects being carried out by Trusts within the conurbation.
3. A potential scrutiny review of the Patient Transport Service in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire was identified by Members as part of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee's work programme.
4. The Chair, Vice-Chair and lead officers met with representatives of the East Midlands Ambulance Service to discuss a potential scrutiny review on 29 February 2008.
5. At the meeting of the Joint Committee on 11 March 2008, Members agreed that "an initial report regarding patient transport services be requested for submission to a future meeting of this Committee."
6. The Department of Health published guidance in 1991 on the criteria for establishing which patients were eligible for non-emergency patient transport services in the document: 'Ambulance and other Patient Transport Services: Operation, Use and Performance Standards' [HSG 1991(29)].
7. This was superseded in September 2007 by new guidance entitled Eligibility Criteria for Patient Transport Services (PTS). A copy is

included as an appendix to the report and provides background material for Members.

Issues

8. Patient Transport Services are provided through a number of contracts agreed with multiple commissioners. In Nottinghamshire this includes Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust (tPCT), Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.
9. Increasing emphasis is being placed on the ability of scrutiny to influence the commissioning of services. Commissioning in the NHS is the process by which NHS Trusts ensure the health and care services provided most effectively meet the needs of the population. The process can include assessing population needs, prioritising health outcomes, procuring products and services, and managing service providers.
10. Scrutiny can look at all the stages of this process and it is recommended that the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee's review of the Patient Transport Service considers
 - The service that is currently provided
 - The framework that the service operates in – what national requirements is it required to meet and what it is locally commissioned to achieve
 - Whether the current service meets and/or is commissioned to meet the needs of patients
 - What should future commissioning requirements for the service include

Provider Perspective - EMAS

11. The principal provider of PTS in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is the East Midlands Ambulance Service. Representatives of the Trust will attend the meeting and provide a presentation on the operation of the PTS to allow Members to understand the service that is currently available from the perspective of a provider.
12. The East Midlands Ambulance Service Patient and Public Involvement Forum (PPIF) undertook a survey of the PTS Service provided by the East Midlands Ambulance Service and published a report in November 2007. A copy of the report is attached as an appendix to this report. The Forum made a number of recommendations to the Trust and the Joint Committee may wish to discuss the progress that has been made, with particular regard to the following recommendations:

- The assessment process for the patient's needs, i.e. type of transport and whether an escort is required should be reviewed. Periodical reviews are recommended of patients' assessment of needs as a measure for service improvement.
- The majority of patients commence their return journey within 30 minutes, but for patients who have a long wait it can be quite arduous because they are not always made aware of how long they have to wait, e.g. they may need to have something to eat or drink or go to the toilet. Also patients have been known to wander away from the waiting area, which may have been a result of not knowing how long they had to wait for transport. This can also cause difficulties for the PTS staff. EMAS Trust needs to outline what standard of service patients should expect and identify the lines of responsibility between EMAS and the hospital particularly when patients are dropped off and collected. The Forum suggests the use of Lay Responders in reception to ensure patients' personal needs are met.
- Patients should be made aware of the position of the Ambulance Liaison Office in the hospital by a notice in the waiting area as in many hospitals it is hidden out of the way.
- The Forum recommends a dedicated PTS Customer Service Line so that patients or carers could arrange, rearrange or cancel their transport bookings more easily.

Commissioner Perspective – Nottinghamshire County tPCT

13. Representatives of Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust (tPCT) will also attend the meeting to provide a presentation on the commissioning arrangements for the PTS by primary care trusts. Members may wish to consider:
 - How the commissioner identifies patient needs
 - How the commissioner meets those needs through the service that is procured
 - How the commissioner manages the contract for the service to ensure that the needs of patients are met
 - How the commissioner reviews the commissioning of the service to ensure that if patient needs change the service can evolve to meet those changed needs
 - How the commissioning arrangements ensure that the service is providing best value.

14. The tPCT is just one of the commissioners of the PTS. The Joint Health Scrutiny Committee may wish to include submissions from other commissioners when it is next scheduled to consider PTS at the meeting on 9 September 2008.

Recommendations

15. It is recommended that
 - i. the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee consider the evidence provided and identify any other area where further information is required.
 - ii. the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee request representatives of Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust attend the meeting on 9 September 2008.

Councillor Chris Winterton
Chair of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

Background papers:

World class commissioning vision summary – DH, December 2007