

Summary

1. Nottinghamshire County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a scrutiny review of the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust in November 2006 following the Trust achieving a 'Weak' rating in the Healthcare Commission's Annual Health Check for quality of services, and a 'Fair' rating for use of resources.
2. The review was conducted in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council and sought to deliver an evidence based assessment of the East Midlands Ambulance Service's (EMAS) performance and services in rural areas. This included an examination of the reasons for the Healthcare Commission's rating.
3. Since the 2006 Annual Health Check, the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust has been reconfigured to form a new trust covering the previous EMAS areas of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Rutland and the areas previously served by the Lincolnshire Ambulance and Health Transport Service NHS Trust (including North and North East Lincolnshire), and part of Two Shires Ambulance NHS Trust that covered Northamptonshire. The Trust was established on 1 July 2006.
4. The new EMAS NHS Trust has consistently demonstrated improving response times across the region despite the significant challenges posed by this reconfiguration.
5. The review recognises this improvement and congratulates the Trust on the recently awarded Good rating for the quality of services.
6. Whilst recognising the overall improvement in performance across the Trust, the review notes that issues of rurality continue to present a challenge to the Trust's services. The review recognises the efforts the Trust have made to improve rural services, including the contribution made by LIVES and First Responders but asks the Trust to seek new ways to further improve the service that rural communities receive. The review recommends that EMAS investigate ways to improve rural services and invites all public service providers to support the Trust with initiatives to base emergency and urgent care in the community.
7. EMAS NHS Trust has shown a commitment to working with partners to improve services across the community. The review makes a number of further recommendations to help improve partnership working.

Summary of Recommendations

- 1 The review recognises the efforts the Trust has made to improve rural services, including the significant contribution made by LIVES and First Responders and encourages the Trust to expand these schemes to other rural areas.
- 2 The Select Committee asks the Trust to seek new ways to further improve the service that rural communities receive. The review recommends that the commissioners of EMAS work with the Trust to investigate ways to improve rural services and invites all public service providers to support the Trust with initiatives to base emergency care in the community.
- 3 Local authorities and other partners to support the use of dynamic stand-by points and should assist EMAS to secure appropriate facilities for resources and crews deployed at such locations.
- 4 That the move to a new Control Centre be supported as an important step towards providing sustained improved response times.
- 5 The Select Committee note and agrees with the Trust's position, that a second smaller control be maintained as part of contingency planning and notes the Trust's evidence that Lincolnshire Control is the more compatible for such purposes.
- 6 Local authorities accept an EMAS invitation to address the management of frequent callers and that the possibility of co-location of local authority and EMAS staff in control centres should be explored

7 The Select Committee recognises that EMAS is best placed to determine the impact of service changes on ambulance services and response times and should be included as a consultee to NHS consultations. The Select Committee also agrees that local authority highways and property proposals can impact on ambulance services and response times and that the Trust should be included in any consultation on such proposals.

8 All NHS Trusts providing services to the Community of Nottinghamshire, should ensure that the East Midlands Ambulance Service is consulted on service developments/variations.

9 In considering proposals for service developments/variations Nottinghamshire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or commissioned Select Committee) should ensure that the East Midlands Ambulance Service is a consultee.

10 Nottinghamshire County Council's Communities Department should ensure that the East Midlands Ambulance Service is included when consulting on highways and property proposals.

11 Local Authorities should provide the opportunity for EMAS to share information that may be of use to them. Local Authorities and PCTs should also involve the ambulance trust when undertaking joint strategic needs assessments.

12 The Select Committee recognises that EMAS is an important partner and encourages NHS Trusts and Local Authority Social Care Departments to review their relationship with the Trust to ensure that it is engaged more effectively.

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The Select Committee recognises that EMAS is an important partner and encourages NHS Trusts and Local Authority Social Care Departments, to review their relationship with the Trust to ensure that it is engaged more effectively, including managing long term conditions, older people and public involvement.

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The Select Committee recognises that EMAS is an important partner and encourages Local Authority Social Care Departments and EMAS to discuss special transport.

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The Select Committee recognises the contribution that EMAS can make to addressing community priorities and encourages local strategic partnerships to involve the Trust.

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The Select Committee encourages Local Authorities to discuss awareness raising opportunities with the Trust.

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The Select Committee encourages Local Authorities to discuss training and education opportunities with the Trust.

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The Select Committee encourages all emergency services to review their existing protocols and strengthen relationships on the ground, in control centres and at management level

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Nottinghamshire County Council's Head of Law and Democracy should ensure that Members are provided with an opportunity to visit the planned new ambulance control centre when operational during 2008.