

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 4

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

4 SEPTEMBER 2013

OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To introduce a number of senior representatives of local public bodies who will be in attendance at the meeting to provide the panel with an update the Out of Hours provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That the Health Scrutiny Panel notes the information submitted at the meeting today and considers if any further consideration is needed on this topic.

BACKGROUND

4. The Panel first considered the issue of Out of Hours Services in a review in July 2006, where the panel considered, what was then, a fairly new service which had been introduced in 2004. Traditionally GPs had been responsible for the provision of Out of Hours services. Under the new GP contract the then PCTs had the responsibility of providing Out of Hours services to their population. At that time an organisation called Primecare provided the service, beginning on 1 April 2004 until the summer of 2007.
5. The panel, at that time, investigated the effectiveness of the service, how it was managed, how performance was managed and how lessons learnt were implemented. The panel issued a number of recommendations that included ensuring the Patients Forum and associated groups were asked for their input in the contract renewal and that a survey on levels of satisfaction was undertaken prior to the contract being renewed.
6. During the more recent review of Winter Pressures the panel heard anecdotal evidence to suggest that the current Out of Hours provider was too quick to call ambulances and seek people's hospitalisation without having physically examined them. The panel were advised that

in the view of the South Tees Clinical Commissioning group (CCG) that the Out of Hours provider did not invest sufficient resources into ensuring that there were sufficient visits by Out of Hours GPs. This situation was made more difficult by the fact that the Out of Hours Service did not have experience with the patients in the way the General Practice (GP) does and that the Out of Hours provider does not have access to the patient's medical records. The evidence presented to the Panel was that there had been significant underestimates in the commissioning process for Out of Hours Services and the view coming from the CCG would suggest that the service was not delivering as it should, as a result.

7. The Out of Hours service is now provided by Northern Doctors Urgent Care. At the panel's update meeting in July the panel heard that the Out of Hours provider, Northern Doctors Urgent Care and the CCG Clinical Lead, Dr Milner were collaborating with the NDUC Medical Director to review pathways and ensure robust criterion for those patients requiring admission to hospital.

In Attendance

8. For this meeting, the following representatives will be in attendance for a round table discussion on the topic.
 - John Harrison, Chief Executive, Northern Doctors Urgent Care
 - Representatives from the South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group including
 - Amanda Hume – Chief officer
 - Dr Mike Milner
 - Helen Muscroft – Commissioning Manager – Provider Management
 - Nicola Jones
 - Jo Dobson

Possible Areas to Explore in Further Detail

9. The panel may wish to explore the following areas in more detail
 - i) What evidence is there that the Out of Hours Service is more likely to call for an ambulance and seek hospital admission because of lack of patient information and in order to 'transfer the risk'?
 - ii) Are there sufficient resources to cover the number of visits needed by GPs?
 - iii) When is the new contract up for renewal and has consultation been undertaken with patients, GPs, the Health Sector etc in order to feed in to the requirements of a new contract?
 - iv) During the life of this current contact, what has worked well and what hasn't worked so well and what actions have been taken in order to mitigate any failings?
 - v) Are there effective systems to record and monitor data and performance? How is performance managed?

- vi) Given the Out of Hours service has been in operation since 2004 and, in the light of experience, what is the future for the Services?

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- a) Minutes of the Health Scrutiny Panel – 25 July 2013
- b) Final Report of the Health Scrutiny Panel – 30 April 2013
- c) Final Report of the Health Scrutiny Panel – Out of Hours Services – July 2006

Contact Officer:

Elise Pout - Scrutiny Support Officer

Telephone: 01642 728302 (direct line)

Email: elise_pout@middlesbrough.gov.uk