

East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Whiting Way
Melbourn
Cambridgeshire
SG8 6EN

Date: Wednesday 24 February
2021

Dear East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for their assistance in preparing the report which the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) discussed at its informal meeting on Wednesday 10 February 2021.

As agreed before the meeting, due to the pressure the East of England Ambulance Service Trust as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the HOSC agreed that rather than following its usual practice of having officers present to introduce the report and answer questions the committee may have, instead they would discuss the paper between themselves with questions or queries sent after the meeting. Below you will find a summary of the HOSC's discussion and it would be very much appreciated if a written response could be provided as soon as practically possible.

Firstly, it was noted that with regard to driver training and vacancies, drivers had been seconded over from the Fire Service. There was a concern over the number of staff awaiting DVSA assessment which have been halted during lockdowns and how quickly that can be resolved. In addition, concerns were raised regarding the financial implications of staff not progressing with DVSA assessments.

The HOSC were also concerned about the high number of people moving out of the area as a result of the high cost of housing and the effect this was having on recruitment. There was a specific concern relating to the recruitment of paramedics in urgent care in West Essex potentially having an impact on the loss of experienced staff and rotation of qualified staff.

There was a suggestion that lessons could be learned from the cultural issues experienced within the Fire Service and how they have been addressed. It is believed cultural issues need to be changed from the top management and fed down through the service.

There was concern expressed that the HALO's were only funded until the end of the year. The HOSC would welcome a report on the impact of the HALO's work and the plans regarding funding.

In addition to the above, the HOSC also raised specific questions, which I have set out below:

1. Is there more than one Freedom to Speak Up Guardian?
2. Is it felt that all staff have got the confidence to raise issues and that they will be dealt with?
3. It was noted that actions within the Quality Improvement Plan are 44% complete so far. There are a number of outstanding actions (amber) around important issues such as safeguarding, pre-employment checks, HR processes, bullying and harassment. How are these being resolved?
4. Concern raised that various schemes to assist the Ambulance Service, such as the HALO's and local schemes to assist with picking up residents to release pressure on the ambulance service, are not receiving the required funding/investment to continue, why is that?
5. How frequently is the cleaning and servicing of vehicles undertaken and what is the impact?
6. Concern was raised regarding the number of hours lost due to ambulances waiting at ED unable to offload and the HOSC would like to know how this could be counteracted?
7. In the Public Board Meeting papers from 13 January 2021, the RAG system of actions highlighted a number of actions not yet completed. Could an update on these outstanding actions be provided?
8. The coastal border issue was raised due to the increase in visitors during holiday periods and how that was being managed and how it could be supported. Could an update be provided?
9. Whether the clean down process relating to Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the turnaround time for vehicles?

10. Was the Risk Summit referred to in the CQC paper on 11 September 2020 attended and if so, what was the outcome?
11. A query was raised over a statement in the Executive Statement regarding the 'focussed "well-led?" CQC inspection' and why there is a question mark against well-led?
12. With regard to staff Covid-19 vaccinations, what percentage of staff have had the vaccination?
13. Concern was raised over the figure of 67% of the workforce considered effective in North East Essex and how that was being managed going forward?

At the conclusion of the meeting, the HOSC **resolved**:

- i. A written response be provided to them as soon as possible, answering the above-mentioned concerns and questions.
- ii. They were keen to look at performance at a future meeting in the Summer (date to be confirmed), as the focus of this session had been on the CQC report.

To conclude, I would again like to thank you for providing such a comprehensive report and look forward to receiving your response soon.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Jillian Reeves

Chairman, Health Overview Policy & Scrutiny Committee