

**Report to:** East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

**Date of meeting:** 12 December 2024

**By:** Deputy Chief Executive

**Title:** Ambulance Handovers at the Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH)

**Purpose:** To provide the Committee with a progress update on the work being undertaken to reduce ambulance handover times at the RSCH.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) consider and comment on the update on hospital handovers at the RSCH; and
  - 2) consider whether to request a further update.
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### 1. Background

1.1. Ambulance crews arriving at hospital Emergency Departments (ED) with patients requiring admittance must wait for ED clinical staff to handover the care of their patient before they may leave and respond to further calls.

1.2. The NHS national standard for hospital handovers is 15 minutes and there is an expectation of there being strictly no delays over 60 minutes and of hospital trusts aiming to avoid any over 30 minutes. Delays in hospital handovers result in ambulance crews having to stay with their patients rather than getting back on the road. It also means that patients may have to wait in sub-optimal conditions for assessment and treatment. Hospital handover delays had increased due to COVID-19 and the effects this has had on patient care and ambulance response times have been widely reported.

1.3. At several of its previous meetings the HOSC has considered reports on hospital handovers at the main hospitals for East Sussex patients, namely Eastbourne District General Hospital (EDGH), Conquest Hospital, Tunbridge Wells Hospital (Pembury), and the Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH). These reports showed that of these hospitals, the RSCH in Brighton tended to have a higher level of handover delays compared to others. RSCH continues to be a regional outlier in the length of handover delays.

1.4. At its meeting on 14 December 2023, the Committee heard that there was ongoing work to reduce handover delays at the RSCH. The Committee requested a report be brought to this meeting to update on that work.

### 2. Supporting information

2.1. The report attached as **Appendix 1** provides an update from University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust on the issue of hospital handover times. It covers:

- The RSCH historical context;
- Current challenges in reducing ambulance handover times;
- Ongoing and planned Improvements initiatives at the RSCH.

### 3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 HOSC is recommended to consider the report and decide whether future updates are needed on any of the areas covered in the report.

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**Deputy Chief Executive**

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