

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

Date of meeting: 22 September 2022

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Hospital Handovers

Purpose: To provide the Committee with an update on the work being undertaken to reduce Hospital Handover times.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) consider and comment on the update on hospital handovers; and**
 - 2) consider whether to request a further report on any of the areas covered in the 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 additional calls. This process is called a hospital handover.

1.2. Hospital handovers require co-ordination between two separate NHS trusts – the ambulance trust and the hospital trust. In the case of East Sussex, the ambulance trust is South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust (SECamb) and the hospital trusts are East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT), University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (UHSussex), and Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (MTW).

1.3. 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.

1.4. 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.

1.5. At its meeting on 2nd December 2021, the HOSC considered a winter planning update from the local NHS system that included an ambitious target to reduce hospital handover times to 30 minutes. The figure of 30 minutes is to allow crews to handover patients to the hospital trust in 15 minutes and then spend 15 minutes doing paperwork and cleaning the ambulance. The HOSC then considered a report on hospital handovers at its next meeting on 3rd March 2022 to consider how the system had performed against this target.

1.6. At the 3rd March meeting, the HOSC agreed to request a further update report on the hospital handover times to cover updated performance figures against the national targets and the eradication of the over 60 minute handover times. The Committee asked that the report include the actions being taken to improve handover times at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton and Tunbridge Wells Hospital, which were not included in the March report.

2. Supporting information

2.1. The report attached as **Appendix 1** provides an update from SECAMB on the issue of hospital handover times. It covers:

- The national background;
- The position in Sussex overall; and
- Updates on each of the four main hospital sites that East Sussex residents may attend – Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton, Eastbourne District General Hospital and Conquest Hospital.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The report provides an update to the Committee on the extent of hospital handover delays and the efforts being made to tackle them. 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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