

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

Date of meeting: 14 December 2023

By: Assistant Chief Executive

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

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

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 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 further calls. This process is called a hospital handover. Hospital handovers require co-ordination between two separate NHS trusts – the ambulance trust and the hospital trust. In the case of the Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH), the ambulance trust is South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb), and the hospital trust is University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (UHSussex).

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 RSCH. These reports showed that of these hospitals, the RSCH in Brighton tended to have a higher level of handover delays compared to others.

1.4. At their meeting on 29 June 2023, the Committee heard that there was ongoing work to reduce handover delays at the RSCH. The Committee therefore requested that 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 SECAmb and UHSussex on the issue of hospital handover times. It covers:

- The RSCH historical context;
- Short, medium and long term improvement initiatives taking place at the RSCH;

- Improvements that have been made 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.

PHILIP BAKER
Assistant Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Patrick Major, Scrutiny and Policy Support Officer
Tel. No. 01273 335133

Email: patrick.major@eastsussex.gov.uk