

Item 7: Accident and Emergency: North Kent

By: Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 7 March 2014

Subject: Accident and Emergency: North Kent

Summary: This report invites the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the information provided on Accident and Emergency: North Kent.

It provides additional background information which may prove useful to Members.

1. Introduction

- (a) On 18 January 2013 NHS Medical Director Professor Sir Bruce Keogh announced a comprehensive review of the NHS urgent and emergency care system in England. *The End of Phase One Report*, published on 13 November 2013, outlined the case for change and proposals for improving urgent and emergency care services in England.
- (b) The report made proposals in five key areas for the future of urgent and emergency care services in England:
 - Provide better support for people to self-care;
 - Help people with urgent care needs to get the right advice in the right place, first time;
 - Provide highly responsive urgent care services outside of hospital so people no longer choose to queue in A&E;
 - Ensure that those people with more serious or life threatening emergency care needs receive treatment in centres with the right facilities and expertise in order to maximise chances of survival and a good recovery;
 - Connect all urgent and emergency care services together so the overall system becomes more than just the sum of its parts.
- (c) Phase two of the review is now under way, overseen by a delivery group comprised of more than 20 different clinical, managerial and patients' associations. A report on progress is expected in spring 2014.

2. National pressures

- (a) Keogh reported that the current system of urgent and emergency care is under 'intense, growing and unsustainable pressure' (Keogh 2013: 5). Each year the NHS deals with 438 million visits to a pharmacy in England for health related reasons; 340 million GP consultations; 24 million calls to NHS urgent and emergency care telephone services; 7 million emergency ambulance journeys and 21.7 million attendances at

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A&E departments, minor injury units and urgent care centres. Demand for these services has been rising year on year with almost a 50% increase in emergency hospital admissions over the last 15 years.

- (b) Further, Keogh stated that 'A&E departments have become victims of their own success' (Keogh 2013: 5). Keogh cites three reasons for the growing pressures on urgent and emergency care:
- A rising demand from an aging population with increasingly complex needs and often multiple, long-term conditions;
 - A 'confusing and inconsistent array of services' outside hospital such as walk-in centres and minor injury units;
 - A high public trust in the A&E brand.

3. Winter Pressure

- (a) In August 2013, the Prime Minister announced that 53 NHS Trusts, identified as being under the most pressure, would benefit from an additional £500 million over the next two years to ensure their Accident and Emergency departments are fully prepared for winter.¹
- (b) £221 million of this fund has been allocated to Trusts for winter 2013/14 including Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust (£4 million) and Medway NHS Foundation Trust (£6.1 million). This allocation was followed up in November 2013 by a further £150 million distributed across all 157 Clinical Commissioning Groups in England.^{2 3}
- (b) Further initiatives to relieve winter pressure on A&E include a £3.8 billion integration fund to join up health and social care services and a £15 million cash injection to NHS 111 to prepare the service for potential winter pressures.⁴

4. Recommendation

Members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment on the reports.

¹ Department of Health, 'Prime Minister announces £500 million to relieve pressures on A&E', published 8 August 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-500-million-to-relieve-pressures-on-ae>

² Commons Select Committee, 'Urgent and Emergency Care', published on 21 January 2014, <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/health-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/urgent-and-emergency-care/>

³ Health Service Journal, 'Government announces A&E fund winners', published on 10 September, http://www.hsj.co.uk/acute-care/government-announces-ae-fund-winners/5063077_article

⁴ Department of Health, 'Prime Minister announces £500 million to relieve pressures on A&E', published 8 August 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-500-million-to-relieve-pressures-on-ae>

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Background Documents

Transforming urgent and emergency care services in England - Urgent and Emergency Care Review: End of Phase 1 Report, Professor Sir Bruce Keogh KBE, published 13 November 2013, <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/keogh-review/Documents/UECR.Ph1Report.FV.pdf>

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