



Buckinghamshire County Council

Overview & Scrutiny Committee for Health

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Dear Will

Healthcare Commission

Core Standards Assessment Annual Health check 2006/2007

The Buckinghamshire Public Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (PHOSC) is pleased to offer comments on the performance of the Ambulance Trust within the above process. It has been somewhat difficult for the PHOSC to comment on many of the core standards due to there being little match in those standards and the work undertaken by the OSC during the past year.

I would also like to note that the specific piece of work involving the PHOSC, namely the monitoring of the 60 minute call to needle Thrombolysis target, has occurred since the formation of the new South Central Trust and therefore the commentary does not refer to the Two Shires Trust. The PHOSC will ensure that any future work will take account of the core standards where appropriate.

The following comments are now offered:-

First domain – Safety

Standard C4(d) Healthcare organisations keep patients, staff and visitors safe by having systems to ensure that medicines are handled safely and securely

. In Oxfordshire drugs are centrally stored with a robust stock monitoring system whereas in Buckinghamshire all drugs are kept on station and stock control is managed via a circular email system. Concern was expressed that this could result in potential difficulties in resource allocation in an emergency that could impact on a patient's safety. The members of the committee were told that a different system of medicines storage is being implemented by the trust

Third Domain – Governance

Standard C11 Healthcare organisations ensure that staff concerned with all aspects of the provision of healthcare are

- a) appropriately recruited, trained and qualified for the work they undertake;**
- b) participate in mandatory training**

The national target of 60 minutes call to needle for Thrombolysis was identified since the formation of the South Central trust, as an area of underachievement in Buckinghamshire, mainly resulting from a lack of trained staff to deliver the service. In comparison to other counties across the trust Buckinghamshire had only a handful of trained staff. This was identified previously as an area of non-compliance, but a robust training plan is now in place to ensure targets are met. It is impressive that this has been swiftly implemented and will be completed by the end of March 2007. The PHOSC was encouraged to note that the trust was quick to identify the issues and put in place a plan to address them. A professional training programme is in place and regularly undertaken to ensure this target will be achieved. Members from the PHOSC recently attended a full day's training and were impressed by the rigorous screening procedure used by means of the pre-hospital thrombolysis checklist.

Fifth Domain – Accessible and Responsive care

Standard C19 Healthcare organisations ensure that patients with emergency health needs are able to access care promptly and within nationally agreed timescales and all patients are able to access services within national expectations on access to services.

Due to a number of historical and geographical reasons, the Trust is currently underperforming against the national A8 target in Buckinghamshire with achievement ranging between 60 to 75% against a target of 80%. Whilst the situation is of concern, the OSC has been reassured to see evidence of a gradual improvement in performance with actions and investment in place to address the situation. It is an area that the OSC intends to regularly monitor, particularly with the advent of Call Connect which may have a further detrimental impact on achievement of targets.

The PHOSC has been encouraged since the formation of the South Central Ambulance Service to note a willingness and openness from management to proactively share information and business planning on a regular basis and a commitment to deliver results which build on best practice procedures.

Yours sincerely,

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