

Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Briefing Note: An update from Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Purpose of the briefing note: To answer previous questions from members and provide updates on operational data from Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

- 1.1 This briefing provides an update on topics of questioning from members at the previous HOSC meeting on 31 August 2023
 - 1.2 Escalation processes – Healthwatch Thurrock and the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) held a meeting to determine clear routes for escalation of complaints. A process is now in place and has been agreed between the Trust and ICB for referring for onward support for people who are treated at Southend or Broomfield hospitals.
 - 1.3 Cancer care – The Trust has followed up with clinics and staff around the process for provision of care once a person out of Thurrock returns from hospital. Process updated to include out of hospital care and district care referral routes.
- 2.0 Operational update from the Trust
- 2.1 Industrial action
- Staff continue to work hard to provide patients with the best possible care during the ongoing industrial action
 - Wherever possible, elective activity (both outpatients and inpatient) continues – especially high-priority services for example, cancer treatments. Where cancellations happen, the vast majority of patients are given another appointment close to their original date
 - The Trust has had to cancel 4,362 surgeries since April 2023 – this includes both inpatient and day-case surgeries. 444 or 10.2% of these were cancer-related surgeries
 - The Trust has had to cancel 31,614 outpatient appointments since April 2023 – this includes both new and follow up appointments. 3,264 or 10.3% were cancer-related appointments
 - Please note that these statistics include all cancellation activity on strike days, some of which may have been cancelled for other reasons.
 - The Trust focuses on putting on catch up clinics in some areas where there is particular pressure.

2.2 Urgent and emergency care

- Across the Trust's emergency departments (EDs), performance against the four-hour standard in September was 67.1%, down slightly from 67.5% in August
- The average time across the Trust to triage patients after arrival was 12 minutes in September. At Basildon Hospital this was five minutes; at Broomfield Hospital it was 11 minutes; and at Southend Hospital it was 22 minutes
- The Trust is redesigning processes when seeing patients in its EDs. Basildon Hospital is working to develop surgical and frailty same-day emergency care (SDEC), Broomfield Hospital is focusing on frailty, and Southend Hospital is reviewing the unnecessary use of its SDEC and is looking to establish a medical receiving unit.

2.3 Ambulance handovers

- There were 6,463 ambulance arrivals in September 2023, compared to 4,262 in September 2022, which is a 51.6% increase
- In September the average time for an ambulance to offload a patient was 22 minutes, down from 25 minutes in August and the quickest time since February 2022
- In September 44.7% of ambulances handed over in under 15 minutes, and 84.9% under 30 minutes, which are both improvements from August. There were 253 ambulances waiting over 60 minutes, down from 460 in August
- We are already seeing an increase in ambulance attendances in October, indicating that we are getting busier.

2.4 Cancer performance

- The Trust has a target that 75% of people are seen within the 28-day faster diagnosis standard by March 2024. Performance was 64.9% in August, down from 68.8% in July, although this remains a key area of focus we are on trajectory to meet the target
- At the end of September there were 770 patients waiting over 62 days on GP-referred pathways to rule out or treat cancer, up from 653 in August. There is a target of under 475 patients waiting over 62 days by March 2024
- Performance has been affected by industrial action and higher than expected dermatology referrals which will mean extra capacity needs to remain in place until the tele dermatology service sees more patients in the community. August also saw more staff on leave although this reduced in September
- The top cancers contributing to the backlog are colorectal, urology, skin, and gynaecology.

2.5 Elective care and referral to treatment

- In September there were 247 patients waiting more than 78 weeks for treatment, in part due to the impact of industrial action. This is up from 192 patients in August
- The Trust has been validating its waiting list to check with patients to see if they still need an appointment, which has led to some being discharged and releasing appointments for those who need care

- The majority of patients waiting over 65 weeks will have an appointment booked by the end of October 2023. The Trust remains assured that we can virtually eliminate this cohort of patients by the end of the year.

2.6 Diagnostics

- The Trust has a diagnostics target is to ensure patients receive tests within six weeks. In September this was provisionally achieved for 70.4% of patients, down from 74.5% in August
- Performance was lower than planned for investigations of the upper digestive system (gastroscopy), the heart structure (echocardiography), the colon (colonoscopy), how well the bladder releases urine (urodynamics) and the lower part of the large bowel (flexi-sigmoidoscopy)
- There has been successful recruitment of radiographers, and elective recovery funding has been agreed to bring in additional external staff and resources into the organisation for endoscopy
- Further work is planned on general anaesthetic endoscopy and cystoscopy, and the Trust is putting on additional echocardiography sessions.

2.7 Services in Thurrock

- Community diagnostic centres (CDCs) will increase diagnostic capacity. They are in progress, but until they are built the Trust is installing mobile capacity to speed up community diagnostics. By the end of 2023 there will be mobile MRI and CT facilities based at the Orsett Hospital site. Planning work is underway to bring further temporary diagnostic capacity to the area from April 2024, and details will be shared once plans are confirmed. There will also be a temporary endoscopy unit coming to Orsett Hospital for late 2023, allowing the Trust to provide additional endoscopy services to south Essex residents until the Pitsea CDC is built.
- While we recognise the condition of Orsett Hospital is not optimal, we can assure that regular health and safety checks by our estates teams are carried out to ensure the site remains safe for use. If urgent repair work is required, this is addressed while being mindful of avoiding unnecessary spend until the future of the site is confirmed.

2.8 News and developments

- Staff based at the Trust's Essex Cardiothoracic Centre have carried out the country's first procedure to place a new pacemaker into a patient's heart that suffers from a slower-than-normal rate. The new device is leadless and is implanted via a patient's leg, avoiding a visible incision. It is more easily retrievable and has double battery life of traditional pacemakers
- State-of-the-art manikins are the centre piece of a new simulation suite at Basildon Hospital that will help improve patient care, by helping the Trust's doctors better train for a range of medical situations. The five hi-tech dummies in the suite have the ability to realistically mimic breathing, blinking, produce heartbeats, and even talk and scream.
- The Trust ran public engagement events at The Place in Pitsea to share news of the planned Pitsea CDC. Across the events on 28 September and 9 October, over 200 residents had the opportunity to hear from representatives from the

Trust, the ICB, Essex County Council, and Basildon Council, and provide their feedback.

3.0 CQC Update – a verbal briefing will be provided to members at the committee meeting.

For any questions regarding this briefing note, please contact:

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