

Report of Dacorum Borough Council Representative on Hertfordshire Health Scrutiny Committee for Health in Dacorum Committee Meeting of 9th March 2016

The meeting of 16th December 2015 was attended by Cllr Jan Maddern substituting for the regular representative.

At the meeting of 21st January 2016 there was an update on the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST). Approximately 70 student paramedics have been recruited and continual recruitment is taking place but it takes 3 years to qualify as a paramedic.

For some years clinicians (paramedics, GPs and nurses) have been in control rooms to assist in triage, and it has been decided to greatly increase their numbers.

Concerns were raised by Committee members about missed targets for response times. It was stated by EEAST that if an ambulance arrives within the target time with a less qualified crew, and the wrong equipment and drugs it is classed as a “success”. However if the ambulance arrives just outside the target time, but with well-qualified staff and the right equipment and drugs it is classed as a “failure”.

It was asked what was the single reason for not meeting response times. The reply was that all ambulance trusts are under the R2 target (8 minute response time 75% of the time for potentially life threatening conditions eg stroke). The EEAST representative questioned whether the target was appropriate and said that more ambulances would be needed to meet targets.

Delays of transfer at hospitals is an issue but EEAST is working with acute hospitals in Herts and Beds to address this issue.

If the 111 service deems a patient to have a potentially life-threatening condition, the computer automatically passes the case to the ambulance service. Herts is below that national target of 9% of 111 calls being referred to the ambulance service. In Herts and Beds, 48% of calls that EEAST attend do not result in a patient being conveyed to hospital.

There are still first responders, trained lay volunteers who can be phoned or texted in the case of a cardiac arrest or other emergency where a patient needs treatment very quickly.

Satnavs on ambulances are as up-to-date as possible. If 999 is phoned from a landline, the location automatically goes to the ambulance and is uploaded onto the satnav.

The health budgets and quality of care (Francis) scrutiny café will take place over two days in March 2016. There will be two themes.

Fiona Guest

Dacorum Representative on Hertfordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee