

Ambulance Response Programme

Introduction

In 2015 NHS England commissioned a pilot Ambulance Response Programme to test out new ways of working for the service to maintain and improve clinical outcomes for patients in the face of increasing demand. Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) has been one of the services that participated in the pilot from the outset in October 2015.

The University of Sheffield undertook a full evaluation of the programme and on 13 July 2017 the Secretary of State for Health supported the formal recommendation from NHS England to roll out the programme to every ambulance service in England. The intention is for the new standards, outlined in Appendix 1, to be implemented by this winter.

Key issues

Concerns regarding the need to modernise how ambulance services are organised are set out in the appendix and relate to:

- the eight minute response time target for urgent “red” calls
- no response time target for calls classed as non-urgent i.e. “green”
- 60 second time for call handlers to determine the response for the patient
- time when the clock is stopped
- avoiding unnecessary ambulance dispatches

Pilot

The pilot tested a new operating model and new set of targets and involved over 14 million calls over an 18 month period. The evaluation was positive and the full report is available on the NHS England website at the following link:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/arp-evaluation/>

Key points of the new model include:

- giving staff slightly more time to identify patients’ needs, allowing quicker identification of urgent conditions
- new target response times across four categories, covering every patient
- changing the rules around what “stops the clock”, so targets can only be met by doing the right thing for the patient
- introducing three standardised pre-triage questions to increase early recognition of cardiac arrest
- new clinical indicators for heart attack patients and stroke patients

Next Steps

As it is a national issue the intention is to ask YAS to explain the potential impact of the new standards and any changes that will be required to the Yorkshire and Humber Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations for HSC

Members of the Health Select Commission are asked to:

- Determine any specific questions to submit to the Yorkshire and Humber Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ask the Yorkshire Ambulance Service in relation to the new standards.

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