

# **South Western Ambulance Service (North Area) Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Aims and Objectives**

To collectively scrutinise the planning, design and delivery of services provided by the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAS) to:

- Hold SWAS to account for its performance for the North Area, which is the area formerly covered by the Great Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust i.e. B&NES, Bristol, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Wiltshire
- To review and develop policy that affects all local authorities in the SWAS (North Area)
- To scrutinise the impact of the services provided by SWAS on all local communities in the North Area served by the Trust,
- Any issue in relation to the planning, design or delivery of healthcare services by SWAS that impacts on two or more local authorities within the North Area served by the Trust
- To act as the body which will be formally consulted in the event of a decision by two or more participant HOSCs or by SWAS itself that a proposal by SWAS or its lead commissioner to vary or develop services constitutes a “substantial variation”
- To review the impact of legislative changes which directly or Indirectly affect the provision of ambulance services in the SWAS North Area

To have specific responsibility (but not limited to):

- The scrutiny of performance against national and local response time targets

- The scrutiny of performance against other national and local Targets
- The scrutiny of the strategic direction of the planning, design and delivery of healthcare services provided by SWAS
- The scrutiny of the commissioning of ambulance services within the North Area served by the SWAS
- The remit of the South Western Ambulance Service (North Area) Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee excludes:
- The scrutiny of any matters relating to the planning, design and delivery of healthcare services provided by SWAS that impacts on a single local authority, without first seeking the approval of the relevant local authority
- The scrutiny of individual cases
- The scrutiny of the management of staff

## **Rationale**

Local authority Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (HOSCs) have statutory powers to scrutinise the provision of healthcare services to their local communities. HOSCs have an important role in:

- Involving local people and community organisations in scrutiny activity
- Developing a dialogue with service providers and other stakeholders outside the council
- Taking up issues of concern to local people
- Reviewing whether goals are being achieved
- Examining what can be done to solve problems and enhance performance and achievement
- Assisting SWAS achieve their aims through providing practical support where possible and appropriate

Where health services are delivered by a single provider across a number of local authority areas, as is the case with ambulance services provided by the SWAS, it is recognised that there are benefits of the relevant local authorities coming together to scrutinise the planning, design and delivery of these services in partnership.

This will ensure:

- A co-ordinated approach to the scrutiny process
- A common understanding of issues affecting all local authorities within the SWAS North Area
- A single forum for the discussion and review of issues affecting all local authorities within the SWAS North Area
- An identified body to respond to proposals to vary or develop services that have been determined to be a “substantial variation” by two or more local authority HOSCs or by SWAS

### *Legal Framework*

From April 2013 (under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and 2013 Regulations) the power of health scrutiny will rest with local authorities, and local authorities have flexibility to determine how to discharge the health scrutiny functions. It could be by full Council, by a Committee appointed under Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, by an overview and scrutiny or a joint overview and scrutiny committee.

The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 state in Part 4, Paragraph 30:

“ two or more local authorities may appoint a joint committee (a "joint overview and scrutiny committee") of those authorities and arrange for relevant functions in relation to any (or all) of those authorities to be exercised by the joint committee subject to such terms and conditions as the authorities may consider appropriate.”

### **Task Groups**

The Joint Committee may establish a task group comprising of at least two members to carry out an in depth review of a specific issue. A

named lead officer will administer each Task Group, with additional support by other local authority scrutiny officers as appropriate.

As part of its decision as to whether to establish a Task Group, the Joint Committee will consider any funding and resource implications.

### **Scrutiny by Individual HOSCs**

Individual HOSCs retain the right to scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, design or delivery of ambulance services within their area.

It is requested that individual HOSCs advise the Joint Committee of their intention to carry out such a review in order to:

- Prevent duplication
- Identify whether the issue also impacts on other local authorities
- Identify any support that could be provided by the Joint Committee

The final decision to scrutinise an issue remains with the individual HOSC.

The Joint Committee will ensure that copies of its agenda, minutes and work programme are sent to the Chairs of all individual HOSCs.

### **Membership**

Each participating local authority will nominate 3 members of their HOSC to sit on the Joint Committee. Substitutes may attend if required. The following local authorities are members of the Joint Committee:

- Bristol City Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- North Somerset Council
- South Gloucestershire Council
- Swindon Borough Council
- Wiltshire Council
- Bath and North East Somerset

The Joint Committee shall be entitled to appoint a number of nonvoting co-optees. This will include a representative from Healthwatch.

The next election of the Chair and Vice-Chair will take place at the meeting in autumn 2015, and annually thereafter. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will chair the meeting. In the event that both are absent, a member of the Joint Committee from the local authority at which the meeting is being hosted will be appointed to act as Chair. The Chair will not receive a Chair's allowance.

All meetings of the Joint Committee will be held in public. A 15 minute public forum will be held at the start of every Joint Committee meeting.

### **Administrative Support**

Scrutiny Officers from the participating local authorities will support the Joint Committee. The Scrutiny Officer from Bristol City Council will be the lead officer to co-ordinate support arrangements.

Agenda papers and minutes will be made available on the website of the lead local authority. Each local authority will be responsible for displaying agenda papers and minutes on their own websites.

Support arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis unless there are unforeseen circumstances.

### **Funding**

Participating local authorities are not required to make a financial contribution for the support of the Joint Committee.

Individual local authority Scrutiny Officers will be responsible for printing papers for their members.

The venue for meetings of the Joint Committee will be rotated amongst the participating local authorities. The host local authority will meet the costs of providing hospitality.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

The Joint Committee will meet on a six monthly basis. Additional meetings may be arranged if required.

### **Attendance at Meetings and Provision of Information**

As outlined in the Health and Social Care Act 2001, and re-iterated in the 2013 Regulations, NHS organisations and now health service providers, are obliged to respond to requests for information made by the Joint Committee and to attend meetings of the Joint Committee if required.

This duty also extends to scrutiny reviews being carried out by individual HOSCs.

### **Review of Terms of Reference**

The effectiveness of the Joint Committee and its Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis. The next review will take place in spring 2015.