

HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 OCTOBER 2019

Notes from the Meeting for the West Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The focus of this meeting was to Scrutinise the provision of non-emergency transport services (NETS) in Suffolk and to receive an update on progress with the transformation of mental health services in Suffolk.

The meeting papers were circulated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee members in advance of the meeting.

EZEC Non-emergency Transport in Suffolk (NETS)

Summary Background

- The NETS Service in Suffolk was originally run by The East of England Ambulance Service.
- EZEC won the tender to take this over in April 2018
- EZEC Anticipated that staff from EEAST would transfer to them under TUPE
- Co-incidental with this new contract EEAST ramped up their need for front-line staff and were actively recruiting. Many of the EEAST NETS staff moved on to the front line service or changed and transferred to EEAST Cambridge NETS.
- This left EZEC exposed with staffing issues and the need to train up new staff
- Additionally, the figures given for the number of transport journeys was under-estimated which exacerbated the issue
- The criteria for patient transport was not rigorously applied (P15, para 5 and P16, para 12)
- Complaints were being received from Staff, Patients and Hospitals
- More funding was given to EZEC from CCG
- In Feb 2019 CCG did a deep-dive and exposed the areas which needed improvement
- In May there was a CCG follow up examination and it revealed that the majority of actions were not completed or embedded.
- The performance measuring criteria accompanying this pack are inconsistent and it made it difficult to evaluate
- Page 31 Evidence Set 3 from Healthwatch provides details of the issues that have been the main focus of this investigation necessary remedial action.
- CCG has now put together a recovery plan and is monitoring and working with EZEC to improve performance.
- EZEC has committed to providing an additional 14 vehicles and recruiting 25 additional staff.

A number of questions were put to EZEC which included:

- Training criteria and Continuous Professional development
- Driver Training and Monitoring

- The effectiveness of journeys and travel times
- Recruitment and Retention
- Vehicles and tracking.

In view of the close involvement of CCG in monitoring the performance of EZEC, the Committee determined that it would allow a period of time for the improvements to be implemented but would then arrange for a further investigation by Scrutiny to be reassured that significant changes had occurred. Additionally, it was requested that the performance criteria be reflected in the same way to aid comparisons.

Update on progress with the transformation of mental health provision in Suffolk

This was intended to update the committee with progress to date and the Scrutiny focus is given on P33 item 3.

The Committee was asked to note the report and the fact that this is still very much "work in progress" with most of the implementation proposed for 2020/21.

What is new:

- 111/2 service has been pushed back to May 2020 due to inability to attract staff.
- Early adopter sites in Haverhill and Ipswich have been assigned link workers – at this stage it is too early to say how successful this will be
- KOOTH a new online mental health support service for 11-18 year olds was launched
- Drug and alcohol dependency services remain the responsibility of Public Health but there is a desire to strengthen these services and to work closer with the mental health teams (dual diagnosis)
- GP Practices have commenced a programme of ensuring that patients with severe mental impairment receive annual health checks.

My view is that it remains very much a "plan on paper" with very little tangible evidence of change. I remain concerned that there is little provision in the plan for prevention and none evident for contingency. I have voiced these concerns.

Margaret Marks
30 October 2019