

## HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 23 May 2023 at Shire Hall, Gloucester.

<b>Present</b>	Cllr Andrew Gravells MBE (Chair)	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson
	Cllr David Brown	Cllr Alan Preest
	Cllr David Drew (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Adrian Bamford
	Cllr Tim Harman	Cllr Collette Finnegan
	Cllr Stephen Hirst	Cllr Helen Fenton

### 1. APOLOGIES

1.1 The following apologies were noted at the meeting: -

1.2 Cllr Stephan Fifield, (it was explained that, following his recent cabinet appointment, Cllr Fifield was no longer able to sit on the committee). The new committee membership would be confirmed at the Gloucestershire County Council meeting the following day, 24 May 2023.

1.3 Cllr Linda Cohen – no substitution

1.4 Following the recent local council elections and district appointments at local authority annual meetings, the following membership updates were noted.

- **Cheltenham Borough Council:** Cllr Adrian Bamford (no change)
- **Cotswold District Council:** no representation at this meeting (confirmation to be made in July)
- **Forest of Dean District Council:** no representation at this meeting (Cllr Julia Gooch has since been confirmed as the Forest of Dean District Council representative for the 2023/24 committee year)
- **Gloucester City Council:** Cllr Collette Finnegan (no change)
- **Stroud District Council:** Cllr Helen Fenton (no change)
- **Tewkesbury Borough Council:** no representation at this meeting (confirmation to be made in July)

1.5 Due to an NHS National Conference in London, the following officers were unable to attend the meeting and gave their apologies.

- Sarah Scott – represented by Siobhan Farmer (County Council)
- Mary Hutton – represented by Ellen Rule (NHS Gloucestershire)
- Ingrid Barker – represented by Graham Russell (Gloucestershire Health and Care Foundation Trust)
- Angela Potter – represented by Des Gorman (Gloucestershire Health and Care Foundation Trust)

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- Douglas Blair – replacing Paul Roberts as the new CEO of Gloucestershire Health and Care Foundation Trust

1.6 Other apologies: Nikki Richardson – Healthwatch Gloucestershire

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Collette Finnegan declared a personal interest following the recent appointment as a working volunteer for the Gloucestershire Health and Care Foundation Trust.

## **3. MINUTES**

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 were confirmed and agreed as a correct record of that meeting.

3.2 The committee noted the information that had been provided by NHS Gloucestershire in response to public representations made at the meeting on 14 March 2023, (relating to the Practice Plus Group delivery of the GP Out of Hours Service).

3.3 The following statement, (made on behalf of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee), formed part of the response.

### **Statement issued on behalf of the Committee**

3.4 In fulfilling its scrutiny function, the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, (HOSC), has taken a particular interest in the performance of the NHS 111 and GP Out of Hours Service in Gloucestershire.

3.5 During the past six months, the committee has received regular updates on the performance of the service. As part of its work, and to gain a better understanding of some of the issues impacting on the service, lead members, including Chair of the Committee, Cllr Andrew Gravells, and Vice-Chair, Cllr David Drew, visited the Practice Plus Group, (PPG), Call Centre at Stoke Gifford, Bristol, in November 2022.

3.6 Following the visit, and in response to the Care Quality Commission Inspection of the Gloucestershire GP Out of Hours Service in November 2022, the Chair and the Vice-Chair requested that an update be provided to the committee at its meeting on 14 March 2023, inviting representatives from the CQC and from the Practice Plus Group to give detailed presentations, and to respond to questions. Representations from members of the public were also considered at the meeting, outlining individual concerns about the performance of the Gloucestershire GP Out of Hours Service.

3.7 In response to the representations, and noting the committees' ongoing concerns about the performance of the GP Out of Hours Service, NHS Gloucestershire produced a briefing note on the outcomes of the CQC inspection

and the actions being taken to address issues relating to the delivery and performance of the Practice Plus Group run service.

3.8 Both the responses and the briefing note, (circulated on 19 May 2023), were noted at the meeting at the committee meeting on 23 May 2023 and supplementary documents with the agenda for that meeting. The documents can be viewed [here](#).

3.9 Chair of the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Andrew Gravells, confirmed that, in response to the committees concerns, HOSC would continue to work closely with the Care Quality Commission to monitor performance, and to ensure the safe and effective delivery of the GP Out of Hours Service in Gloucestershire.

### **Committee discussion at the meeting on 23 May 2023**

3.10 In response to updates provided at committee meetings held on 15 November 2022 and 14 March 2023, the committee emphasised the need to make improvements to the GP Out of Hours Service provided by the Practice Plus Group (PPG).

3.11 Responding to concerns about the 'requiring improvement' classification accredited by the Care Quality Commission, (CQC), following an inspection of the service in November 2022, members engaged in an in-depth discussion on the NHS Gloucestershire response to the outcomes of this, and previous successive CQC inspections, of the out of hours service during the past 5 years.

3.12 The committee acknowledged that the Practice Plus Group had been inspected four times over the current contract period, and whilst there had been some consistencies in performance, there had also been some variations in the themes reported on by the CQC during this time. In each instance, action plans had been produced and worked on jointly with the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and more recently, with the Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, (ICB).

3.13 It was explained that, post pandemic, NHS Gloucestershire had returned to normal contracting arrangements. Whilst the ICB continued to provide additional support to the Practice Plus Group to address the issues identified by the most recent CQC review, it was reported that NHS Gloucestershire had also given formal notice to the Practice Plus Group against the current contract, with the intention of re-procuring for a new medium-term contract to provide NHS 111 and Out of Hours Services in Gloucestershire.

3.14 The committee was advised that the re-procurement process was anticipated to take around 12-15 months to complete, with the new contract commencing in the Summer or Autumn of 2024. Several members questioned the length of time in which to award the contract to a new provider and asked if the timeline could be reduced. NHS Gloucestershire explained that the process had been set out in the shortest timeframe possible and adhered to professional advice.

3.15 Chair, Cllr Andrew Gravells, proposed that a letter be sent to NHS England to convey the committee's concerns about the impact of ongoing issues on the residents of Gloucestershire in relation to the quality of the service being provided by the Practice Plus Group and the length of time anticipated for NHS Gloucestershire (ICB) to procure a new contract. The committee endorsed the proposal, supplemented by a request that a copy of the letter be sent to the 6 Gloucestershire MP's and that regular updates be provided to the committee.

**Action by – Chair of the Committee/NHS Gloucestershire**

#### **4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS**

4.1 No public representations at this meeting.

4.2 Chair, Cllr Andrew Gravells, referred to several additional questions that had been submitted by Mr Keith Smith, (Mr Smith made representation at the committee meeting on 14 March 2023). With members agreement, the Chair noted the questions at the meeting and asked NHS Gloucestershire to respond by providing written responses. The Chair also offered to contact Mr Smith direct to discuss his concerns. **Actions by NHS Gloucestershire/Cllr Andrew Gravells**

#### **5. SOUTH WESTERN AMBULANCE SERVICE UPDATE**

5.1 The committee received an update from the County Commander of the South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust.

5.2 The update included references to the recently launched new five-year [Trust Strategy](#) and to ambulance response times defined by local authority area.

5.3 Highlighted by the report was the piloting of a Mental Health Rapid Response Vehicle (MHRRV) to enhance the existing street triage/rapid response service in the South Gloucestershire area. It is hoped the pilot will help inform the future SWASFT mental health strategy. The response vehicle to operate between Monday to Thursday from 1400 to midnight and will be driven by a SWASFT Emergency Care Assistant (ECA) with a Mental Health Clinician on board.

5.4 Welcoming the piloting of the rapid response vehicle pilot, members representing the Forest of Dean and Cotswold Districts upheld concerns about ambulance response times in rural areas. Noting the concerns, the County Commander stated that work continued with stakeholders to improve response times in hard to reach locations. Requesting more detailed data at the next meeting, members asked what the committee might do to support SWAST in reducing ambulance response times. The County Commander stated that focusing on the issue of inappropriate demand impacting on the service, raised awareness of when to call an ambulance would be useful, in addition to providing information on services provided by other sources, including Pharmacies.

5.5 It was agreed that the issue of handover delays was a whole system issue and not specific to the ambulance service.

5.6 Referencing links between the work of the NHS 111 team and SWAST, it was suggested that the relationship be explored in a piece of work recently commissioned by NHS Gloucestershire and the County Council. Noting that the work would be undertaken by Newton Europe later in the year, the committee requested an update at a future meeting. **Action by – NHS Gloucestershire**

5.7 Commending the progress being made, the County Commander was thanked for the update.

## **6. GLOUCESTERSHIRE MATERNITY SERVICES (TEMPORARY SERVICE CHANGES) UPDATE**

6.1 The committee received an update on the temporary service changes at the Aveta Birthing Unit, (Cheltenham General Hospital), and the Stroud Maternity Unit. Following an extension of the arrangements in January 2023, a review of the changes was made in April 2023.

6.2 The committee noted the Memorandum of Understanding that had been circulated with the agenda relating to the further extension of the following service changes: -

- Cheltenham Birthing Unit to remain closed to births for a further 6-month period (review date July 2023)
- Stroud post-natal beds to remain closed for a further 6-month period (review date July 2023)

6.3 The update included information on the current midwifery workforce position in Gloucestershire and the actions taken to address the recruitment and retention of midwives for the county since the last update to the committee in March 2023. The report presented at the meeting can be viewed [here](#).

6.4 Responding to concerns about the decision to temporarily close 6 post-natal beds at Stroud Hospital in October 2022, Cllr Andrew Gravells suggested that a small delegation of members request a meeting with Health Ministers/NHS England, (either in person or via remote access), on factors affecting the recruitment and retention of midwives in the local area and the impact of such on the provision and delivery of maternity services to the residents of Gloucestershire.

6.5 Cllr Gravells agreed to contact the MP for Stroud, Siobhan Baillie, to seek her views on how to address local concerns. **Action by – Cllr Andrew Gravells**

## **7. GLOUCESTERSHIRE INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM (GICS) PERFORMANCE REPORT**

7.1 The committee noted the Gloucestershire Integrated Care System, (ICS), Performance Report relating to the performance of the NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board. The report included information on performance, quality and workforce. The report was taken as read.

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7.2 During the meeting, members attention was drawn to a breaking news item from Sky TV and a feature on Wotton Lawn Hospital. An urgent briefing was requested (provided by NHS Gloucestershire later that day). Since the meeting, Cllr Gravells has arranged to meet with Douglas Blair, CEO of Gloucestershire Health and Care, to discuss current issues.

## **8. NHS GLOUCESTERSHIRE INTEGRATED CARE BOARD (ICB) REPORT**

The NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, (ICB), report was taken as read at the meeting. The report included updates from Integrated Care System (ICS) Partners with responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day commissioning and provision of NHS services in Gloucestershire.

## **9. WORK PLAN**

The committee noted the dates of future meetings: -

11 July 2023

10 October 2023

28 November 2023

It was reported that at the Corporate Scrutiny Committee meeting on 19 April 2023, the committee had received an update on Motion 910 Tackling the Crisis in NHS Dentistry. At the meeting, it was agreed HOSC should continue to monitor the position, in addition to considering a report with a specific focus on issues impacting on the recruitment of dental professionals.

## **CHAIRPERSON**

Meeting concluded at 12.00