



Welsh Ambulance Service Trust - Local Review of Patient Safety, Privacy, Dignity and Experience whilst Waiting in Ambulances during Delayed Handover

Terms of Reference

Why are we doing this work?

It is clear that the Covid-19 pandemic has introduced unique and unprecedented pressures on the healthcare system, however, it is Healthcare Inspectorate Wales' (HIW) continued commitment and goal to check that people in Wales are receiving good quality care, which is provided safely and effectively, in line with recognised standards.

As part of our annual reviews programme, we committed to undertake a local review of the WAST during 2020-21.

Scope and Methodology

A range of information sources indicate that ambulance waiting times outside hospital Emergency Departments can be excessive, particularly when the healthcare system is under pressure. These information sources include Welsh Government ambulance monthly performance indicators, Serious Incident notifications to Welsh Government, intelligence held by WAST, media reports, and discussions between HIW and senior staff within both WAST, and Health Boards. In addition, delays in the handover process with Emergency Departments resulting in reduced ambulance availability, were highlighted during HIW's local review of WAST during 2019/20. The previous review explored how the risks to patients' health, safety and well-being were being managed, whilst they were waiting for an ambulance. A copy of this report can be found [here](#).

In response to the issues outlined above, this local review will consider the impact of ambulance waits outside of Emergency Departments on patient safety, privacy, dignity

and overall experience. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced unique and unprecedented pressures on the healthcare system; in view of this, the review will consider patient experiences over the past 12 months in order to understand what impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on this issue.

We will also consider whether there is local and regional variation across Wales and highlight any good practice we identify. This will include exploring the following:

- The procedures in place between each hospital emergency department and WAST for accepting patients from ambulances into the care of health board staff
- The overall experience of patients whilst waiting in an ambulance to include their safety and any impact on their wellbeing
- How patient dignity is maintained and needs are met, to include nutritional, hydration and toilet needs whilst waiting in an ambulance
- The impact of the delays on ambulance staff.

To assess the areas detailed above, the review will include analysis of relevant guidelines and standard operating procedures, as well as other information such as clinical incidents relating to handover. We will also collate the views of patients through surveys to understand their experience whilst waiting in an ambulance. We will engage with Health Boards, WAST and Community Health Councils to seek their support in obtaining patient views. We will also undertake a number of interviews with ambulance and emergency department staff and senior managers within WAST and Health Boards. We will also be making a staff survey available to allow all staff to share their views and experiences with us. HIW aims to complete all fieldwork remotely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Timescales

The table below includes estimated timescales for the review:

| Activity | Timescales |
|--|------------------|
| Fieldwork planning and document review | March 2021 |
| Fieldwork | April – May 2021 |
| Report Publication | July 2021 |

Analysis and reporting

Throughout the review fieldwork phase, the review team will give immediate feedback if any issues arise which represent an immediate risk to patient safety.

The review will conclude with the publication of a report that will set out the key themes and recommendations identified from our work. Any information provided by staff during the fieldwork will not be directly attributed to them in the report. Also, a summary of anonymised survey results will be included within the report.

The Trust (and health boards where applicable), will be provided with a copy of the draft report to comment on factual accuracy and each will receive a copy of the final report prior to its publication.

If areas for improvement are identified, the Trust and Health Boards may be required to complete an improvement plan, which details how the services will address the findings set out in the report. Following review, any improvement plan will be published on HIW's website alongside the report.

Personal data

This review forms part of HIW's work to provide independent assurance on the quality and safety of healthcare services in Wales. The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 (Part II, Chapter 4) gives HIW the power to carry out inspections, reviews and investigations of the NHS or services provided for the NHS. This terms of reference sets out our intended approach to the review.

Where we process personal data, this is in accordance with data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations. Further information is set out in HIW's privacy notice which can be found on our website <https://hiw.org.uk/privacy-policy>.