

Our plans to improve A&E performance in Lambeth and Southwark

Foreword from Dr Pat Holden

I am a GP partner in the Surrey Docks Health Centre in Southwark, and for the last two years, I have been one of the clinical commissioners sitting on the Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body. I am a clinical lead for commissioning urgent care services and sit on Lambeth and Southwark's Urgent Care Board

Clinical Commissioning Groups are responsible for planning and buying NHS services for their local community. We work with other clinicians and healthcare providers to ensure that local people get the most accessible and effective healthcare services possible.

During my time practising as a GP, I've seen first hand lots of good work that is going on locally but we know there are areas in which we can improve. Many of you will have seen the issues in media about the increased pressures upon our A&E departments, especially last winter. We have been working across Lambeth and Southwark to address these issues and ensure patients are treated in a timely way. Our local residents play a key role in this work and so we have developed this document to inform you about the work we are doing. It sets out what our issues have been locally, what we have already put in place and our plans over the coming year.

You may have seen there is also a national review of Urgent & Emergency Care currently underway which published initial findings on 13th November. We agree that there needs to be a more radical change in the way we deliver services if we are to meet future challenges and will be closely following the outcome of this review.

1. Why do we need to improve urgent and emergency care?

This document talks about what we are doing to improve urgent and emergency care - it is a working document and we will update it as we move forward with our work across Lambeth and Southwark. Urgent and emergency care covers those services that are used when a patient needs immediate medical attention and/or cannot wait for a GP appointment.

It is important that we deliver timely care to our patients and a key national target is that 95% of patients attending A&E should be seen, treated, admitted or discharged within four hours. This is sometimes used as a barometer to assess how the broader urgent care system is performing. Last winter, a number of A&E departments across the country, including our local hospitals, were under increased pressure, which meant there were periods during which they did not meet the 4 hour target.

We are doing a number of things locally to improve A&E performance and this plan outlines how we, the CCG, will work with local hospitals, community services and others to make this happen. We are focussed on delivering good quality care to our patients, but need to bear in mind that we are doing this against a backdrop of a growing population with increasing pressures upon our health service and a challenging financial climate.

This plan sets out the work we have done to date, and what we plan to do in the coming year to ensure we are delivering effective, high quality and timely urgent and emergency care services across Lambeth and Southwark.

2. Lambeth and Southwark Urgent Care Working Group

Within Lambeth and Southwark, we have two A&E departments, which are located at St Thomas' Hospital (part of Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital Foundation Trust) and King's College Hospital Foundation Trust, and we work very closely with these two organisations. In order to provide high quality and efficient care we need to work together. Lambeth and Southwark have had an Urgent Care Working Group in place for over 10 years - this is a group of people, both clinicians and managers, from our local health services e.g. hospitals, community services, general practice, social care and the London Ambulance Service.

This group monitors what is going on locally and works together to jointly develop and deliver services. Patients and carers need to play a key role in these discussions and we work with our local Healthwatches, the new independent consumer champions created to gather and represent the views of the public.

3. The current position in Lambeth and Southwark

a. How we are doing - 4 hour A&E target

During 2012/13 on average 95% of patients going to A&E were seen, treated, admitted or discharged within four hours. However during the period of January to March 2013, this dipped below 95%. We have been working to get a greater understanding of the reasons for this as described in the next section.

Waiting times provide only part of the picture. We want to ensure that we provide a consistently high quality of care to our local residents, so we want to hear from you. The NHS has developed a number of ways for patients to feedback about their experience of healthcare services e.g. Friends & Family Test.

b. Understanding the issues

i. How we plan for the winter period

Each year, we develop a winter plan which sets out the arrangements each service will put in place over the winter period so we are sure they can respond to the greater demands on services during this time, for example, additional staffing to manage the expected increase in patient numbers.

On a day to day basis, we have systems that allow us to closely monitor how our local A&E departments are performing, including regular discussions with our local health and social care providers to resolve issues. We cannot look at A&E departments in isolation but also need to consider what is happening in the wider urgent and emergency care system and work with organisations such as community, social care and mental health services who provide support and ensure patients are cared for in the most appropriate setting, whether this be hospital or at home. We have developed a report (called an Urgent Care Dashboard) which provides a summary of what is happening in various services and we will monitor this through the Urgent Care Board.

We asked our local hospitals and other service providers how we could improve the winter

planning process. There was agreement that this had worked well last year and the key recommendation was that it would be useful to start planning for the winter period earlier on. Therefore, this year, we finalised our Winter Plan in September.

ii. What is the data telling us?

Last winter we saw greater pressure upon all our health and social care services and in order to understand the reasons for this, we have completed a detailed review. The review has considered information from a number of Urgent and Emergency care services including the hospitals, Out of Hours, Walk-in Centres, community services and the London Ambulance Service. We have also tried to understand if there has been a change in the types of patients needing urgent healthcare e.g. the types of conditions/illness they are presenting with, or if there are a greater number from particular age groups. The key messages from the review were in line with what our service providers were telling us:

- Whilst the overall number of Lambeth and Southwark patients attending A&E during January–March has not changed significantly in the past two years, there was an increase in the number of attendances amongst the older age groups.
- Similarly, whilst the total number of emergency admissions has not changed, we have seen an increase in the number of patients over 65 who are being admitted to hospital as an emergency
- Local health services have reported that the patients that are presenting at A&E are sicker, with more complex care needs and therefore need more support. Our analysis has given a mixed picture.
- The number of mental health patients presenting at A&E departments that require an assessment and treatment has increased significantly especially people living in Lambeth and Southwark that have not had any contact with local services.
- Both hospitals have experienced some issues with capacity, which they are addressing as part of their own plans - in some cases there has been limited physical space and in others there have not been enough staff.
- The review also highlighted pressures around stroke and care for children.

4. What we have already done and what we plan to do

Whilst the aim of our review was to understand the reasons for the change in A&E performance, it also provided an opportunity to consider all the work we have done to date across Lambeth and Southwark and how this has improved the quality of services we deliver to our patients. We realise there is still further to go and have clear plans in place for this coming winter. These are summarised below:

Campaigns and communication

There are a number of different urgent and emergency care services, and it can sometimes be difficult to know which one is right for you. This is sometimes the reason people go to A&E or dial 999. So one of our priorities is to provide clear information about services in a way that is easy for people to access.

Winter is traditionally a busy time for health services. The cold weather makes it harder for vulnerable people and those living with long term health conditions. Cases of flu increase, as do other bugs such as the 'winter vomiting bug' which can be serious for anyone with

weakened immunity or other health concerns. All of this results in more pressure on health services, with higher numbers of people in A&E departments and more people being admitted to hospital unexpectedly. We are therefore launching a campaign to help direct people to the best service for their needs with the aim of ensuring our health resources are used wisely. Go to www.notalwaysAandE.co.uk for more information.

Lack of information is only one factor leading to people go to A&E and we want to understand what the other reasons are so we will be working with certain groups, including parents and children, frail and elderly patients and those with long-term conditions to consider what support and information they would find useful. For example, last year we delivered the Warm and Well in Winter campaign which provided support to older and vulnerable people during winter months. This proved very successful and we'll be repeating it this year.

Both our A&E departments have a 'Meet & Greet' service, whereby patients are assessed by a clinician and then re-directed to the right place for their care. In some cases patients may be steered towards the Patient & Liaison Service which helps patients register with practices or get an appointment, or it may be the local Walk-in centre, if their condition is less severe.

Self-management

Your local pharmacist provides a range of services and acts as a useful source of advice and information. A number of our pharmacies have accredited Healthy Living Champions, who are front line staff with advanced training. The Healthy Living Champions can provide 'staying healthy' interventions such as stop smoking support, alcohol screening and NHS Vascular Health Checks. In Lambeth we have the Minor Ailments Scheme, where the pharmacist can prescribe medications for certain conditions, avoiding the need to go to the GP and we are exploring rolling this out more widely.

111

Although our patients are currently able to access the 111 service, this was not rolled out in Lambeth & Southwark. It was put on hold due to initial teething problems and we subsequently decided to delay this, so our local residents are encouraged to continue using SELDOC, the Out of Hours service.

General practice

For most people, your GP is your main point of contact with healthcare services. In Lambeth and Southwark we are committed to developing services in partnership with our residents and we have used different ways to gather your views about your experience of general practice and the key issues you feel we need to address in the coming years. Some of the key priorities that have come back are:

- Reducing variation in the quality of care
- Improving access to care
- Integration/better co-ordination of care
- Developing a wider range of community services as alternatives to hospital based care.

In Southwark, we have developed a strategy for the next 3-5 years which outlines how we improve the quality of care within primary care and community services. In Lambeth we are developing an approach that engages General practice across the borough to deliver high quality care and improving health outcomes.

We routinely ask our practices to review which of their patients attend A&E as a way of identifying any improvements that could be introduced in their surgeries and this information is shared so that GP practices can learn from each other. A number of practices now provide same day urgent appointments for children which they reported had reduced the number of their patients attending A&E. We have done some initial work with our local GP practices looking at how the demand for appointments compares with current access and we will be doing a more detailed piece of work looking at opening hours.

Urgent Care Services - Out of Hours, Urgent Care Centres, Walk -in Centres

We have a number of local Urgent Care services operating locally which provide timely advice and treatment and our reviews have shown that feedback from patients has been positive. We held a patient engagement event in May as part of the review of the Guy's Urgent Care Centre and one of the key messages from our residents was that it is not always clear what each service provides, therefore as we've described, we'll be using different ways of providing clear information to patients about what is available.

A&E Departments/Hospitals

We are fortunate in having two specialist hospitals in our local area which are considered centres of excellence. However this does bring with it some challenges. Both Trusts see large numbers of patients a significant portion of whom do not live in the local area. King's is a major centre for both stroke and trauma whilst St Thomas' provides a range of specialist services and its location means a lot of patients living outside of the local area will attend the A&E department.

Both hospitals are constantly reviewing how they can make improvements. They have a number of plans in place which include the following:

- Redevelopment of A&E departments creating additional space to see patients
- Increasing the number of beds and operating theatres
- Improving access to tests/diagnostics
- Recruiting more staff and increasing availability of senior consultants at weekends and other peak times
- Working with community services and social care colleagues to ensure that when patients are ready and fit to be discharged home, they have all the right arrangements in place e.g. meals on wheels, therapies etc.
- Working with the London Ambulance Service to ensure that 999 calls are managed in the best way

Integrated Care

Integrated care means health and social care professionals delivering better quality and value joined-up care. The aim is to treat the whole person, looking at their health and social needs so that they can stay healthy with support to live home and avoid stays in hospital or care homes. For example, in Lambeth and Southwark we have developed a specialist phone

line that gives GPs direct access to Geriatricians to better support older patients. Through the service, the GP can arrange an urgent appointment with a Geriatrician who can then arrange the necessary support for the older person when they need it in their own home.

Mental Health

Last winter we saw an increase in the number of patients with mental health problems attending both of our A&E departments. Most of these patients had not had any contact with mental health services before this. St Thomas' Hospital has introduced a new way of caring for this group of patients, which means that they are transferred more quickly from A&E to a ward where they can be given the right treatment. King's College Hospital has increased both mental health nurse and consultant cover in their A&E department to ensure the increased number of patients attending are still seen as quickly as possible. Our service users have told us that they need the right type of support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to prevent them having a relapse and in some cases needing to be admitted to hospital. So we have plans to deliver a 'Recovery Network' in Lambeth which will provide more support in the community. We are also continuing to work with our local mental health Trust, South London & Maudsley, on a range of different projects.

Alcohol

Due to its location, a high number of A&E attendances at St Thomas' Hospital are related to alcohol and recreational drugs. In February we successfully trialled an Alcohol Recovery Centre in the A&E department, which provided a different way of caring for this group of patients and freed up doctor and nurse time. This has now been mainstreamed.

5. Additional investment

During the summer, NHS England announced that £500million would be targeted at more challenged urgent care systems to support them to manage winter demand over the next two years. The Lambeth and Southwark health system was not identified through this exercise but it has recently been announced that £150 million will be available for additional health economies and we are awaiting further details. We are already in the process of developing proposals so we can implement these as quickly as possible. For example, we are keen to look at improving access to services by looking at seven day working arrangements.

6. How you can get involved

We are committed to developing local health services which are informed by genuine patients and public engagement. There are a number of ways you can get involved. For example each practice across Lambeth and Southwark has a patient participation group (PPG) which feed into broader discussions via a number of mechanisms. Lambeth are currently asking their residents to join the BIG Lambeth Health Debate and help plan NHS services for the next 5 years – a number of events have been arranged. Southwark is developing its primary and community care strategy and held an engagement event earlier this year to ask patients for their views on what good primary and community care should look like.

Call to Action

NHS England is calling on patients, the public and staff to join in a discussion about the future of the NHS, so it can plan how best to deliver services, now and in the years ahead. This call to action sets out the facts about future demands on NHS services, how the budget is currently spent and how services are delivered. There will be a number of ways for everyone to engage with this including:

- Feed in your views online
- Local and national events with NHS staff, patients and the public