



HM Coroner Jacqueline Lake  
Senior Coroner for Norfolk  
By email

**East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust**  
Whiting Way  
Melbourn  
Cambridgeshire  
SG8 6NA

23 October 2023

Dear Ms Lake,

I am writing further to the inquest into the death of Geoffrey Hoad, which concluded on 7 September 2023. Following which you made a Regulation 28 Preventing Future Death Report and this is the Trusts' response to that report.

I understand that you heard evidence from [REDACTED] AOC Patient Safety Manager, during the inquest in relation to the actions the Trust is taking to respond to Category 2 and 3 calls and that you have acknowledged that a range of actions are being taken on both local and national levels in relation to response times (as this is not an issue specific to this Trust) however you have stated that despite the steps being taken, considerable delays in attending to calls continue.

The Trust has a range of specific actions in place to improve response times to patients which include:

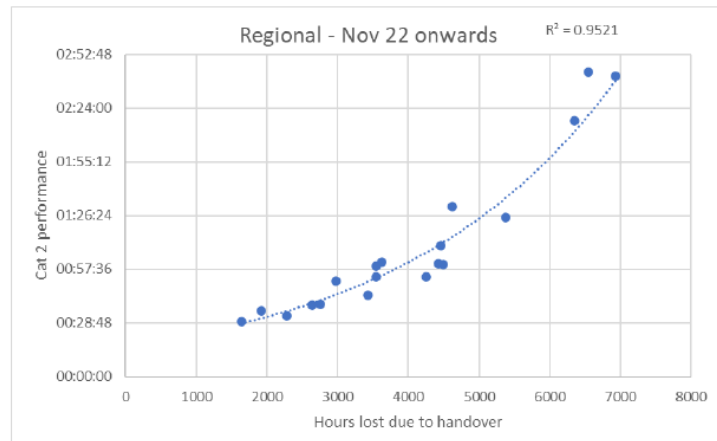
- Additional recruitment with the aim for there to be over 300 more frontline clinicians in place by March 2024. Year on year we have increased patient facing hours by around 9% in Norfolk and Waveney.
- Additional recruitment of clinicians within our control environment, allowing for greater volumes of clinical triage to improve patient safety and to transfer patients to alternative services where appropriate. This is supported by the establishment of an Unscheduled Care Coordination Hub within Norfolk where we are working with the Integrated Care Board, the 111 provider and community services to increase referrals of appropriate patients to alternative services and to provide remote support to crews on scene. As a result of these actions our rate of conveyance to hospital in Norfolk and Waveney is one of the lowest in the Trust.
- The implementation of our Operational Performance and Improvement Plan (OPIP) which is our plan to improve our own efficiency as an organisation and to maximise ambulance availability, I attach a presentation on this with this letter to provide an update on this work.

Meeting the C2 response time has been a challenge for all ambulance services. Modelling by NHS England (NHSE) demonstrates there is a strong relationship between hospital handover delays and the ambulance C2 performance. NHSE's regression model indicated that based on previous performance, in order to reach an average response time of 30 minutes for C2 patients,

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a maximum of 1,500 lost hours per week should not be exceeded (see graph below). Equally if more than 1,500 hours are lost per week, the C2 response time is unachievable.

The Regional NHSE oversight meetings have been formed to support this important maximum standard. Currently levels exceed this significantly and in Q1 weekly lost hours exceeded 2,700 hours per week.



EEAST are a member of the Front Door Group looking to improve arrival to handover times. This is chaired by the Deputy Director for Intensive Support from the NHSE/I team. We have shared good practice from West Suffolk and Colchester Hospitals within the group, which is attended by all Acutes in the area. EEAST have approached each Acute to review the current process and suggested changes to allow quicker offloads.

EEAST has also been involved in an 'Improvement Week' which ran between the 9th and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 in Norfolk and Waveney. The clinical teams have been working alongside crews, dispatchers, and call handlers to better understand the issues behind delays for patients and helping identify ways to resolve them.

There is some indication that these actions are working, with C2 response times having reduced by 29 minutes (39%) this September compared to last and C3 response times having reduced by 1 hour and 20 minutes (37%). However we recognise that further improvement is still required, hence our continued focus on the range of actions identified above.

I hope this letter is helpful in setting out the steps we are taking to improve response times for our communities, please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Executive

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