

NORTH EAST AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST – RESPONSE TO LATEST CQC INSPECTIONS AND INDEPENDENT REVIEW REPORT

Summary

North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) has been invited to provide the Committee with a response to recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections of its services, as well as the findings of an independent review of the Trust.

Detail

1. During July and September 2022, the health and social care regulator undertook its latest assessment of NEAS. The CQC carried out this unannounced inspection as part of its continual checks on the safety and quality of healthcare services, and specifically looked at Emergency and Urgent Care, the Emergency Operations Centre, and the NHS 111 service. They also inspected the 'Well-Led' key question for the Trust overall, but did not examine Patient Transport Services (PTS) or Resilience (HART) services at this time.
2. The CQC published its report in February 2023. Its findings resulted in NEAS being downgraded from 'Good' overall to 'Requires Improvement', with particular concerns being raised in relation to the 'Well-Led' domain (which was rated 'Inadequate').

	New CQC Rating	Previous CQC Rating
Overall	Requires Improvement	Good
Safe	Requires Improvement	Good
Effective	Requires Improvement	Good
Caring	Good	Good
Responsive	Good	Good
Well-Led	Inadequate	Good
Date of Inspection	26 th – 28 th July & 13 th – 15 th September 2022	
Date Report Published	2 nd February 2023	
Date Previous Report (that was rated) Published	10 th January 2019	

The CQCs full report can be found at <https://api.cqc.org.uk/public/v1/reports/857fc7df-c6e9-495b-ac23-d519497e7eaf?20230216100442>.

3. Following this inspection, the CQC served the Trust with a notice under Section 29A of the Health and Social Care Act 2008. They told the Trust it needed to make the following significant improvements:
 - a) to ensure governance systems operated effectively;
 - b) in listening, responding, and acting upon feedback from staff and other relevant persons;
 - c) in incident reporting, investigating and monitoring of actions to prevent re-occurrence ensuring improvements are made as a result;
 - d) in medicines management to reduce risks to patients.
4. On 7 July 2023, the CQC published a further report after conducting a follow-up unannounced focused inspection of the Trust's Emergency and Urgent Care (EUC) services during April and May 2023. Whilst the overall report did not give any ratings, the individual grading for EUC improved from 'inadequate' to 'requires improvement'.

The CQCs full report can be found at <https://api.cqc.org.uk/public/v1/reports/4f432398-0677-43c7-8d1e-b7780764708f?20230707070450>.

5. NHS England commissioned a limited scope independent review into patient safety concerns and governance processes related to NEAS. The review considered the facts surrounding a number of individual cases, reviewed the processes surrounding coronial investigations, and reviewed the seven previous investigations and reviews undertaken by the ambulance service to determine if they were sufficient to fully understand and resolve issues. Published on 12 July 2023, the full report can be found at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/north-east-yorkshire/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2023/07/MASTER-NEAS-Independent-Review-Final-Report-V21-3.7.23-002.pdf>.

Both NEAS and the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) subsequently published assurance statements – these can be accessed at:

- NEAS
https://www.neas.nhs.uk/media/206824/final_070723_assurance_statement_board_approved_54_pdf_v3.pdf
- NENC ICB
<https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/media/1jwbi2l4/nenc-icb-assurance-statement-neas-independent-review.pdf>

6. The NEAS Chief Executive Officer and the Assistant Director – Communications and Engagement are scheduled to be in attendance to inform the Committee of the Trust's response to the CQCs and independent review findings. A presentation has been prepared in advance and is available at **Appendix 1**.
7. For further background information, the latest NEAS Quality Account for 2022-2023 can be found at https://www.neas.nhs.uk/media/206231/neas_annual_quality_report_2022-23.pdf.

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