



East of England Ambulance

Patient & Public Involvement (PPI) Forum

Annual Report 2007-08

PPI Forum Details

PPI Forum Name: East of England Ambulance

PPI Forum Support Organisation (FSO):

Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services
83-87 Pottergate
Norwich NR2 1DZ

Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) Regional

Centre: Eastern Region – Office based in Cambridge

Current Forum Members:

Michael Taylor (Chair)

Pam Morris (Vice Chair for Beds & Herts area)

Sandra Fielding (Beds & Herts area)

Jon Rapley (Vice Chair for East Anglian area)

David Russell (East Anglian area)

Hugh Kingwell (East Anglian area)

Tony Cooper (East Anglian area)

Paul Wood (East Anglian area)

Keith Dabbs (Vice Chair for Essex area)

Tony Wright (Essex area)

Margaret Shaw (Essex area)

Thelma Nickerson (Essex area)

Paul Shailer (Essex area)

John Newman (Essex area)

Our thanks to former Members who took part in the work of the Forum over the last year including John Hartshorne, Peter Bates and Barry Jervis.

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in Health Forums

PPI Forums are made up of groups of volunteers from the local community who are enthusiastic about helping patients and members of the public influence the way that local healthcare is organised and delivered.

Forum members come from different backgrounds and have a range of experiences and skills. They are keen to work with all sectors of the Community to find out what people really think about health and healthcare in their local area – and take action wherever necessary.

PPI Forums have the power to independently monitor the quality of health services.

Chairman's report

This is the final Annual Report for the East of England Ambulance PPI Forum which highlights our activity and achievements over the past year.

After some uncertainty it was decided that PPI Forums in their current form would end on 31st March 2008. The new set up from 1st April 2008 of Local Involvement Networks (known as 'LINKs') will be county based and be at very different stages in their development from 1st April. With this in mind over the past few months, along with the majority of the current PPI Forum members, we have put together a proposal to continue as an 'Ambulance Service User Group' for the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust. I am pleased to report that the proposal was submitted and approved subject to terms of reference to the Trust Board in January 2008.

As chairman, I have continued to attend Trust Board meetings and have been invited to comment on many matters that affect both patients and the public. Our attendance at various key committee meetings and working groups has always been welcomed and our input is highly valued.

We are sorry to see the end of the current PPI Forums, as we care deeply about the future of the Ambulance Service, but hope to continue some momentum and maintain a positive working relationship with the Trust through the Ambulance Service User Group and LINKs.

Michael Taylor, Chairman
March 2008

Forum Meetings

The table below provides a summary of Forum meetings held which include area meetings, chairs meetings and meetings in public.

Meeting	Number Held
Meetings (in private)	21
Meetings in Public	5

Several members of Trust staff, including the Chief Executive, have attended Forum meetings throughout the year and provided the Forum with useful insight into many areas of service provision and a wide range of topics. These have included:-

- Call Connect system which comes into effect on 1 April 2008
- Operation of the Air Ambulance Service
- Out of Hours Service
- Strategic Direction
- Issues faced by the service in accessing Travellers Sites and the actions that have been taken to build good working relationships with travellers

Joint working

The Forum has been involved with several other PPI Forums, Working Groups and meetings throughout the region. These include:-

- East & North Herts PCT
- West Herts PCT
- West Herts Hospital
- Norfolk PCT
- Suffolk PCT
- Essex PPI Forum Chairs group

Members have linked in with Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the region through direct attendance at meetings or in liaison with other PPI Forums.

Members have also liaised with the Lions Club for Message in a Bottle.

Annual Health Check

The Forum has prepared its submission to the Healthcare Commission from 1st April 2007 to 11th March 2008. The part year submission is due to the abolition of PPI Forums on 31 March 2008 and their replacement by LINKs from 1st April 2008. The Forums commentary will be submitted along with the Trust's submission to the Healthcare Commission in May 2008.

Community First Responders Survey (CFRs)

The Forum embarked on its biggest ever piece of research looking at the effectiveness of the CFRs. Approximately 1800 surveys were sent to CFRs in the region. 366 completed surveys were returned and are now in the process of being analysed. A report containing the key findings of the survey will be presented to the Trust Board in March 2008. Forum members will also be visiting each of the Health Emergency Call Centres in the region to monitor the calls where CFRs are dispatched and will undertake interviews with key staff.

Experience shows that CFRs can make a significant difference to patients so the Forums key aim is to help ensure that the CFRs are utilised as effectively as possible.

Members have also engaged with some of their local CFR groups.

Out of Hours (OOH)

The Forum has continued to monitor OOH in areas where this is provided by the Ambulance Trust and has liaised with other PPI Forums in the region where the OOH provision is run by another provider.

Members have been involved in the production of patient leaflets for this service and in Norfolk a member was involved in the OOH Quality Inspection visit.

PALs & Complaints

The Forum was involved in the production of the Trusts new complaints procedure and leaflet. The Trust took on many of the concerns and comments expressed by the Forum and the Forum was pleased to see these were included in their new Policy and the new leaflet.

The Forum also receives regular reports from the Trust on complaints, PALs enquiries and commendations allowing them to monitor and highlight any issues of concern from the information.

Message in a bottle

Members have been actively promoting the 'Message in a Bottle' scheme which provides the emergency services with vital details of any illness or allergy and a contact name if they are called to your house.

A member in Hertfordshire has been busy promoting the scheme in St Albans and Harpenden including attendance at the Women's Institute Annual meeting at the St Albans Arena. Outlets have also been successfully launched in other counties by the Forum – 3 in Suffolk and 1 in Cambridge.

Patient Transport Services (PTS)

Members continued to monitor PTS where possible throughout the region.

In North East Herts members assisted another PPI Forum with a PTS survey involving the 3 hospitals in the area.

Acute Services Review

The Strategic Health Authority reviewed services offered by all acute hospitals in the East of England. The work was broken down into 7 workstreams and a PPI Forum member sat on each group to ensure the views of patients and the public were listened to and considered in any proposed changes.

The Chair of the East of England Ambulance PPI Forum sat on Workforce and the main Steering group and another member sat on the panel in Hertfordshire.

Trust Inductions

Forum members from across the region took part in Trust Inductions by giving a talk on the work of the Forum. This has helped to ensure that new staff coming into the organisation have a good awareness of the role of the PPI Forum.

Visits

In liaison with the Forum the Ambulance Trust hosted a number of visits for all PPI Forums in the region during May and June 2007. This provided an opportunity for members to tour the Health Emergency Operations Centre and hear about the services provided by the Trust and enabled other PPI Forums in the region to gain a better understanding of the Ambulance Service. The visits also helped to strengthen the links between this Forum and others in the region.

Members have visited all the Health Emergency Operating Centres in the region at Bedford, Norwich and Chelmsford.

Members visited the Air Ambulance base at Norwich airport and received a talk and a tour round one of the helicopters.

The East Anglian Area sub group of the Forum visited the newly commissioned depot at New Costessey in January 2008;

This depot is working to a new concept in that front line vehicles are based there and held in a pool. The crews serving the Norwich /Norfolk area sign on and are allocated a vehicle at the start of their duty. The vehicles are prepared by staff based at the depot, they are cleaned through inside and out at the end of each duty and are re-supplied with consumables and fuel.

Vehicles based in outlying locations at Kings Lynn, Cromer and elsewhere are rotated through the depot regularly to ensure that the interior and exterior cleanliness and mechanical conditions are kept up to standard.

There is a fully equipped kitchen and lounge for local crews to take their meal breaks. In addition there is secure drug store and consumable store located in the depot.

On signing on, the crews draw their controlled drug bag and are allocated a vehicle from the pool of prepared ambulances. This procedure has a number of advantages, among which are: -

- The crews are available for work immediately after signing on
- The vehicles are cleaned, meaning that cross infection risk is minimised
- The pool of vehicles enable a replacement to be taken over by a working crew in the event of contamination or mechanical faults developing, minimising the time they are not available for front line duty.

Ambulance Vehicle Ride Outs

One member went out with a crew of one paramedic and one Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) from Hemel Hempstead Ambulance Station. Another ride out took place from St Albans Ambulance Station with an Emergency Care Practitioner (ECP).

The purpose of the ride outs was to observe how the crews reacted to the calls, reaction at the scene, treatment of patients at the scene and during transport of patients to hospital and how the ambulance is cleaned and prepared ready for the next call-out.

Key observations made:

- Patients were treated with dignity and respect by all crew members.
- Large and time consuming amount of paperwork for the ECP to complete after each patient in comparison to an ambulance crew where one does the paperwork whilst the other member books the patient in to hospital and re-equips the vehicle.
- General public still don't appear to be well informed as to where, when and how to get help when needed and continue to dial 999 to request an ambulance to transport them to hospital or for a non emergency which could be dealt with by an Out of Hours service.

Representation on Trust Committees

The table below outlines the Forum's representation on a number of Trust Committees and Working Groups. Membership of these committees/groups is an important way of ensuring that the views of patients and the public are fully considered and recognised by the Trust Board and staff in their planning and delivery of services.

Committees:	
Trust Board	Infection Control
Service Delivery Board	Medicines Management
Strategic Planning and Investment Group	Audit Committee
Integrated Governance	OOH Partnership Board (Norfolk)
Ethics Advisory Group	Community First Responder Strategic Group
OOH Partnership Board (South West Essex)	Vehicle Working Group

Declaration

On behalf of the East of England Ambulance Patient and Public Involvement Forum, I confirm that this report is an accurate record of our recent activity and future work plans.

Signed:

Name: Michael Taylor, Chairman of the East of England Ambulance PPI Forum

Date : 11th March 2008