



North East and North Cumbria

REPORT CLASSIFICATION	✓	CATEGORY OF PAPER	✓
Official	✓	Proposes specific action	
Official: Sensitive Commercial	✓	Provides assurance	✓
Official: Sensitive Personal		For information only	

BOARD	
25 July 2023	
Report Title:	Independent Report into North East Ambulance Service
Purpose of report	
<p>The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an insight into the Department of Health Independent Report into the North East Ambulance Service. To provide the Board with assurance that the recommendations highlighted in the report are being addressed and that learning is being shared.</p>	
Key points	
<p>Following a high-profile whistleblowing case relating to the coronial process within NEAS and subsequent criticism of the handling of the whistleblowing process, Government commissioned Dame Marianne Griffiths to independently investigate the issues identified.</p> <p>Please note that the issues identified pre-dates the creation of the ICB. Prior to this Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group acted as lead commissioners for this service.</p> <p>The report was published on the 12 July 2023 and will be shared with the families referenced within the report on 11 July 2023.</p> <p>As part of the publication process, NHS England stipulated the requirement for NEAS and NENC ICB to share the final report with Boards in Private in advance of the publication date. In addition, Boards were asked to approve a required Assurance Statement.</p> <p>The Chair and Chief Executive of NEAS will attend the Board and share the learning from the report and give an oversight on the progress with the recommendations from the report.</p>	
Risks and issues	
<p>It is important that the issues identified and update regarding progress on the recommendations are discussed in full.</p>	

Assurances

- The recommendations within the report which are specifically for NENC ICB have been actioned.
- NENC ICB continue to work with NEAS to monitor progress against all of the actions detailed within this report alongside monitoring performance as part of the oversight role the ICB fulfils.

Recommendation/action required

The Board are asked to:

- Receive the Independent Investigation Report
- Take assurance that the recommendations are being implemented timely.

Acronyms and abbreviations explained

ICB – Integrated Care Board
 NENC -North East and North Cumbria
 NEAS – North East Ambulance Service

Sponsor/approving executive director	Samantha Allen, Chief Executive
Date approved by executive director	17 July 2023
Report author	David Purdue, Executive Chief Nurse

Link to ICB corporate aims (please tick all that apply)

CA1: Improve outcomes in population health and healthcare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CA2: tackle inequalities in outcomes, experience and access	<input type="checkbox"/>
CA3: Enhance productivity and value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>
CA4: Help the NHS support broader social and economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>

Relevant legal/statutory issues

Any potential/actual conflicts of interest associated with the paper? (please tick)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If yes, please specify

Equality analysis completed (please tick)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
If there is an expected impact on patient outcomes and/or experience, has a quality impact assessment been undertaken? (please tick)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key implications						
Are additional resources required?	None noted					
Has there been/does there need to be appropriate clinical involvement?	N/A					
Has there been/does there need to be any patient and public involvement?	N/A					
Has there been/does there need to be partner and/or other stakeholder engagement?	Stakeholders are engaged and briefed and a full communications plan in development which is being led by NHS England					

Assurance Statement

Introduction

The following assurance statement has been compiled by the NENC ICB in response to the Dame Marianne Griffiths report into the North East Ambulance Service.

Specific commissioning points raised within the Independent Report

The following recommendations have been made within the Independent Report which are specific to the NENC ICB.

16. To endorse the proposal currently being put forward by the commissioners to change the commissioning framework moving forward to improve governance oversight arrangements

17. To develop a coherent medium term resource plan with ambulance service commissioners to secure safe and sustainable services

Assurance Statement

The North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board fully accept the findings of the report written by Dame Marianne Griffiths and acknowledge her work in investigating the serious issues identified.

The issues raised precede the creation of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and, as such, this report recognises the transition of responsibility to the ICB on the 1st July 2022. Prior to this date, Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group acted as a lead commissioner for ambulance/patient transport services on behalf of the NHS across the North East.

Following a number of quality concerns identified in 2022 as part of the whistleblowing process, the shadow ICB instigated a risk escalation meeting jointly with NHS England. The outcome of this was to place the Trust into a quality improvement process led jointly between NHS England and the then shadow ICB in which the CQC also attends. This arrangement continued as the ICB was formally constituted and is continuing as part of ongoing oversight. In addition, additional support has been provided to NEAS to strengthen its governance processes. We are assured that this has had a positive impact on the management of governance within the team and the ICB will continue to review this as part of the ongoing oversight meetings.

Since this time, the ICB has implemented new commissioning arrangements for the Ambulance Service within the ICBs Executive team.

Recognising there is a relatively new leadership team in place within NEAS, the ICB has secured well-led support through a 'buddying arrangement' from Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, a Trust rated 'Outstanding' by the CQC. The ICB also acknowledge the significant effort by the NEAS team to rectify the issues identified and is encouraged by the results of the most recent CQC inspection. We are confident such improvements will continue as part of the Trust's ongoing commitment to learn and improve.

We can confirm that additional funding was secured in 2023 for the North East Ambulance Service. £8.6M Additional Ambulance Capacity Fund provided by NHS England has been received. In addition, £18M has been included recurrently in the 2023/24 contract from the ICB.

This level of additional funding was agreed with NEAS within this year's planning round and is based on bringing the organisation much more in line with other ambulance services across England. The ICB is committed to ensuring all NHS providers including NEAS are adequately funded to provide safe and sustainable services and will work with NEAS to ensure this is the case as part of developing ICS medium term financial plans making the best use of the funding provided to the ICB by NHSE.

The North East Ambulance Services leadership team continue to work hard to address the serious findings detailed within the report. The ICB will continue to support them, alongside having oversight of their progress with the delivery of an improvement plan which has been created to address the recommendations in this report and the CQC Inspection findings.