

Ambulance Arrival and Handover

Service User and Carer Engagement Event

25th March 2021

Outcome Report



Overview of Engagement Event

Ambulance Arrival and Handover Overview

In July 2020, The Minister of Health established an interim No More Silos (NMS) Network to produce detailed proposals for the reform of Urgent and Emergency Care. The No More Silos Action Plan focuses on ten key actions for rapid implementation in order to ensure that urgent and emergency care services across primary and secondary care can be maintained and improved in an environment that is safe for patients and for staff.

One of the ten key actions focuses on Ambulance Arrival and Handover Zones.

Ambulance Arrival and Handover Challenges and Recommendations

There has been increasing concern about the growing problem of patient handovers from ambulances to Emergency Departments during the Covid-19 pandemic. Trusts are tasked with putting arrangements in place for physical space for a minimum of six patients arriving by ambulance to be handed over, triaged and assessed. The identified space will enable ambulance turnaround within 30 minutes, thus reducing delays which have an adverse impact on patient experience and patient safety.

Service User and Engagement event Overview

An engagement event took place, using Zoom technology, on 25th March 2021 with service users, carers and representative groups. The session involved a presentation of the Northern Trust 's proposal of how the action could be taken forward by expanding the existing ambulance handover area within the footprint of Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department. A presentation was delivered from a panel of project team members. There was then an opportunity for participants to provide feedback on the proposal, ask the panel questions and provide suggestions. The key discussion points, questions, comments and feedback from this session are outlined in this report.

Acknowledgement

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who participated in the engagement event. Your valuable contributions, questions and insights will help to inform communications and planning for the enhanced Ambulance Arrival and Handover Area in Antrim Area Hospital.

Information on the Proposal

Information about the Existing Arrangements

What are the existing arrangements for ambulance arrival and handover in Antrim Area Hospital?

The existing ambulance handover area within the Emergency Department (ED) footprint of Antrim Area Hospital (AAH) consists of two cubicles and an adjacent corridor area for 3 ambulance trolleys.

This area is used by patients who are arriving by ambulance to AAH ED and who are “not fit to sit”.

The area is staffed with one triage Nurse who accepts handover of patients from NIIAS (Northern Ireland Ambulance Service) and who triages the patient to determine which part of the Emergency Department the patient is most suitable for.

Following triage, patients will wait in the area until they can be moved to the appropriate location within the Emergency Department and receive medical assessment.

What are the challenges with the existing arrangements?

With only two available cubicles and 3 trolley spaces in the adjacent corridor, the existing arrangements are not adequate to meet demand. This means that at times when the Emergency Department is very busy some patients will not be able to enter the Emergency Department on arrival and may have to wait for an extended period in the ambulance until space becomes available. This in turn can also have an impact on the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) meeting the regional turnaround target of 30 minutes.

For patients waiting in the 3 ambulance trolleys on the corridor, their experience and comfort may be somewhat diminished due to the Physical environment. The corridor can be draughty due to automatic doors leading out to the Ambulance Arrival Zone opening and closing and it is difficult to limit noise. The current arrangement means it can be challenging to maintain patient privacy and if the patient requires to be accompanied by a relative / carer there is not suitable space within the area.

Information on the Proposal

Information about the Proposed Enhanced Ambulance Arrival and Handover Area

How does the Trust propose to enhance the Physical Space for ambulance arrival and handover in Antrim Area Hospital?

The Trust's proposal involves the construction of an additional 5 cubicle purpose built Ambulance Bay within the Emergency Department footprint of Antrim Area Hospital. Once constructed, there will be enhanced capacity of a total of 7 designated cubicles and one ambulatory chair for Ambulance Arrival and Handover at Antrim Area Hospital. To build the 5 bedded Ambulance Bay, the Trust is converting an existing storeroom within the Emergency Department and significant capital works are required. Construction work commenced in February 2021 with completion of the new Bay scheduled for 21st May 2021.

Will the Trust recruit additional staff for the new Ambulance Bay?

In order to staff the additional space, the Trust will recruit 1 registered nurse and 1 health care assistant. The area will be staffed - 24/7.

What are the expected benefits?

It is expected that Patients will benefit greatly from the additional space and enhanced capacity including:

- Prompt handover and registration at arrival to Antrim Area Hospital with fewer delays
- Increased comfort, privacy and dignity whilst they wait to be located to the appropriate area within the Emergency Department.
- Adequate space to allow for carer/relative to accompany patient if required.
- Additional staff for the area who can monitor patients closely.
- In times of escalation, the ability for a medical assessment to be carried out in an appropriate environment.



Information on the Proposal

Photographs shared at the Session

How far along is the new 5 bedded Ambulance Bay?



March 2021

All enabling works have been completed.

The old ED Storeroom has been fully cleared and construction works underway.

Information on the Proposal

Photographs shared at the Session

What might we expect the space to look like on completion ?



March 2021

Mock up of how the 5 bedded ambulance bay will be set out

Feedback and Comments from Service User Representatives

Delighted that there will be more staff available for patients waiting in the area particularly as there are currently restrictions for relatives accompanying patients due to the Covid pandemic

A more dignified and private area for patients which is particularly important for specific groups of patients i.e. those experiencing mental health crisis

So important that communication on this new space and benefits for particular groups of Patients reaches appropriate Groups

A clear and informative presentation

Really important for the Project Team to consider how does Family get in touch with a patient waiting in the area. Is there a telephone in the area? Possibility of using iPad for communication

Great that if a patient needs a relative the new space allows for enough space for a relative to sit

Update since Service User and Carer Engagement Event



The new 5 bedded Ambulance Bay has been fully operational from 14th June 2021.



Next Steps | Our plan

We wish to thank you for your participation, engagement and feedback you provided during the Session and we welcome any further questions or queries that you may have now that the area is up and running.

Now that the new area is operational we will monitor closely to ensure that it is having the impact and positive benefits we expected.

A priority for us is to begin to obtain Patient Experience from Service Users and carers who have used the area. This is so valuable for us to help shape and make improvements. We are aware that it can be challenging to gain live patient experience, as patients who use this area, tend to be quite unwell. We would welcome any suggestions you may have of how best to gain this much needed information.

If you have any further questions or suggestions in respect to patient experience please email:

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Northern Health
and Social Care Trust

Thank You