West Suffolk Taskforce

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and Suffolk County Council

Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) performance at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (WSFT) had been under tremendous pressure over recent years. In December 2024, data showed a significant increase in Emergency Department (ED) attendances over the previous 12 months. 89.8% of patients waited for over 6 hours to be admitted, and the average time waiting for an inpatient bed was 22.5 hours. Only 18% of patients were discharge before 12pm from medical wards. It was also apparent that patients and staff were often having a poor experience in our emergency department and that this was not acceptable.

The "Taskforce" was convened in recognition of the need for a comprehensive analysis of cross-sectional contributory factors. It consisted of staff across all WSFT divisions and Adult Social Care, drawing on every individual's knowledge, skills and background. The taskforce was deployed in 4 phases: Emergency Department, Transfer of Care Hub, Community Access Beds and Acute wards where they spent an intensive week embedded in each department gathering intelligence and a deeper understanding of processes, effectiveness, and priorities for sustainable improvement. This was done from late December - March during peak wintertime. A series of detailed recommendations and action plans were produced, prioritised, implemented and monitored through a series of weekly cross-divisional focus groups, where metrics for each workstream were analysed and shared. The impact of this work has been phenomenal, and at month end placed WSFT as 1st in the region and 4th nationally for performance, despite ED attendances during March being the highest on record.