**MINISTERIAL AMBULANCE AVAILABILITY TASKFORCE**

**What is it?**

The Minister announced on 16 January 2020: ‘The Amber Review found that 'ambulance availability' was the single main determinant for the timeliness of Amber response. The review identified a range of issues that reduce the availability of ambulance resources and detailed a number of recommendations to enable improvement. Progress has been made against these recommendations, but I believe more work is needed to realise the necessary improvements in ambulance delivery. It is clear that given the changing operational environment, improvements to Amber response cannot be delivered in isolation from the wider issues surrounding ambulance availability’.

The Minister decided to establish a Ministerial Ambulance Availability Taskforce to lead:

* implementation of recommendations from a recently commissioned independent “Demand and Capacity” review
* rapid delivery of alternative pathways and community-based solutions to prevent avoidable conveyance to emergency departments
* optimisation of the ambulance patient handover process
* improvement in Red performance, and
* build on progress made by the Amber Review Implementation Programme.

**Why is it important?**

* Links to the ongoing work of the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee who commission emergency ambulance, non-emergency ambulance and the emergency medical retrieval and transfer services.
* High profile and of significant public interest.

**What is the impact?**

* Taskforce for asked to lead on specific areas of work including:
  + Understanding and improving productivity
  + Workforce, recruitment and wellbeing
  + Digital change and technology in ambulance services
  + Measurement for improvement.
* Draft report required by end of April 2020
* Final Report required by the end of June 2020 (but potential to slip to Summer 2020)

**What progress has been made?**

* Membership for the Taskforce agreed with Welsh Government
* Members have now confirmed their willingness to take part
* Working on the meeting dates, anticipating 4-5 meetings before the summer
* Project plan being developed, structured approach
* Communications and engagement plan being developed to include key stakeholders
* Terms of Reference drafted for approval by the Taskforce
* Literary review in progress; aim to develop report and technical document
* Important to horizon scan and capture risks within the NHS system
* Enablers and areas which underpin the work being identified
* Aiming to use meetings which are already in place
* Products required: Steering Group terms of reference; timeline; glossary of terms;
* Need information from health boards re alternative pathways; links to social care; potential to develop once for Wales solutions

**Useful resources**

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-update-unscheduled-care-pressures-over-winter-201920-and-next-steps-improve>