

**Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Policy
and Scrutiny Committee**

11 September 2018

Report of the Assistant Director – Legal & Governance

Unity Health Cover Report

Summary

1. This report updates the Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee on actions undertaken by Unity Health (Annex 1) to remedy the difficulties patients are experiencing contacting the practice.
2. It also introduces the Care Quality Commission (CQC) report (Annex 2) following an inspection of Unity Health which resulted in the practice being put into special measures.

Background

3. In July 2018 representatives from Unity Health attended a meeting of this committee to respond to difficulties experienced by patients in contacting Unity Health and in relation to problems with online consultations.
4. Unity Health acknowledged there had not been enough staff to process calls from patients, but that 2 full time call handlers had now been employed to work alongside practice staff to answer telephones.
5. The representatives from Unity Health expressed their sincere apologies to those patients who had suffered as a result of the problems experienced at the practice and assured them that the issues were now being dealt with.
6. They assured Members that they intended to learn from the problems to put them in a better position to serve patients in the future. They also offered to provide an update on progress to the committee at a future meeting. Representatives of the Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group agreed to take away what they had learnt from the failure of the

Unity Health telephone system and share this with other practices to ensure it did not happen elsewhere.

7. The committee agreed that Unity Health be invited back in three months' time to provide an update on the actions being undertaken to solve these issues.
8. Subsequently, on 20 July 2018, the Care Quality Commission published its findings from an inspection of the practice, which has surgeries at Wenlock Terrace and Kimberlow Hill, which rated Unity Health as 'inadequate' and placed it in special measures.
9. During the announced comprehensive inspection on 23 May 2018 the CQC found:
 - The practice did not have clear systems in place to manage risk so that safety incidents were less likely to happen.
 - There were limited arrangements in place to review the effectiveness and appropriateness of the care being provided.
 - Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing prescribing did not ensure that patients were kept safe.
 - Arrangements were not in place to ensure that staff were working within the scope of their competency.
 - Patients found it difficult to get through to the practice by phone.
 - Some patients found the online consultation form difficult to complete.
 - Governance arrangements were not being operated effectively to ensure the delivery of high quality, sustainable care.
 - During the inspection the CQC saw that staff treated patients with compassion, kindness and respect.
10. The CQC stated that the areas where the provider must make improvements as they are in breach of regulations are to:
 - Ensure care and treatment is provided in a safe way to patients.
 - Establish effective systems and processes to ensure good governance in accordance with the fundamental standards of care.

- Establish and operate effectively a system for identifying, receiving, recording, handling and responding to complaints by patients.
 - Ensure staff receive appropriate support, training professional development, supervision and appraisal as is necessary to carry out the duties they are employed to perform.
11. Unity Health has drawn up an action plan that will be regularly monitored by the CQC and NHS England. However, in anticipation of some of the issues raised by the CQC inspectors, the practice has already implemented a number of improvements, including:
- Replacing the contract cleaning company responsible for Wenlock Terrace surgery and approving the replacement all carpeted areas with easy-to-maintain vinyl flooring;
 - Pausing the registration of any new patients;
 - Bringing in additional governance support from the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP).
 - Overhauling the complaints system to ensure all concerns are responded to comprehensively and in a timely manner;
 - Drawing up a new process to document and learn from any significant adverse events;
 - Working with an experienced nurse manager from the RCGP to redesign the skill mix and training of staff;
 - Carrying out a full health and safety audit across all of its premises.
12. Services placed in special measures will be inspected again within six months. If insufficient improvements have been made such that there remains a rating of inadequate for any population group, key question or overall, the CQC will take action in line with enforcement procedures to begin the process of preventing the provider from operating the service.
13. The registered provider must not register any new patients without the written permission of the Care Quality Commission.
14. The service will be kept under review and if needed could be escalated to urgent enforcement action. Where necessary, another inspection will be conducted within a further six months, and if there is not enough improvement the CQC will move to close the service or cancel the

provider's registration.

Consultation

15. There was no consultation involved in the preparation of this report. Information in Annex 1 has been provided by Unity Health and in Annex 2 by the Care Quality Commission.

Analysis

16. There is no analysis included in this report.

Council Plan

17. This report is directly linked to the Focus on Frontline Services and A Council That Listens Residents priorities in the Council's Plan 2015-19.

Implications

18. There are no financial, HR, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, IT, property or other implications arising from the recommendations in this report. However, should Unity Health fail to take sufficient steps to improve its inadequate rating then this could have serious implications for a substantial number of York residents.

Risk Management

19. There are no risks arising from the recommendations in this report but again there could be significant risks for a sizeable number of people in the city if Unity Health fails to improve its rating.

Recommendations

20. The Committee is asked to:
 - Note and comment on the information provided in this report and its annexes.
 - Invite representatives from Unity Health to a future meeting of this Committee to provide a further update on its action plan.

Reason: To assure Members that problems patients have been facing at Unity Health are being resolved.

Contact Details

Author:

Steve Entwistle

Scrutiny Officer

Tel: 01904 554279

steven.entwistle@york.gov.uk

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty

Assistant Director – Legal & Governance

Tel: 01904 551004

Report Approved Date 29/08/2018

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – Unity Health Update Report

Annex 2 – CQC Inspection report