

## Medical Director's Notes - Out of Hours whistleblower's comments

The Fed has received feedback from a whistleblower, via the CCG and in the spirit of full transparency we want to share this along with our response.

The whistleblower raised three specific concerns: 1) there is pressure to manage patients remotely when there are not enough F2F or home visits slots available, 2) particularly just before the overnight period. As a result, 3) staff had left the service causing additional pressure.

The Fed senior team have reviewed the feedback and made the following observations:

- We identified the types of issues and pressures described by the whistleblower, in the autumn of last year. As a result, we put in place a programme called 'People not Process'. This focused on how we communicate with each other, emphasised patient safety rather than NHSE target disposition times and ensuring the service is an enjoyable and supportive place to work. We also restructured the service's senior leadership team.
- We have already seen a positive change and this is reflected in morale. We have good rota fill and a healthy number of new clinicians joining the service including some returning to work with us. We will check our perception with a staff survey.
- Activity in Out of Hours is currently high and reflects primary care more generally. We recognise there is extra pressure at particular times, particularly towards night time. However, we have appropriately resourced rotas, sufficient capacity to manage the service safely and access to 24/7 on-call clinicians who help out when it is busy. This means not all patients will be seen in their NHSE disposition times but we have processes to assess clinical risk, prioritise based on clinical need and not placing pressure on our clinicians.
- The Fed is an open and transparent organisation and we welcome the concerns raised by the whistleblower. If anyone in any of our services has concerns and wants to raise them confidentially they can do so via our Speak Up Guardian Julie Smith ([julie.smith@suffolkfed.org.uk](mailto:julie.smith@suffolkfed.org.uk)).



Ruth Bushaway – Fed Medical Director

## GP Support Hub

The Hub launched in 2019 and supports North East Essex and Suffolk GPs access career development opportunities, return to work advice, health and well-being support with the aim of supporting recruitment and retention.

Forthcoming events include:

- Later Career GP Event:
  - 17 May 2022 at Angel Bury St Edmunds (details below)
  - 15 June 2022 at Wivenhoe House
- Phoenix GP – September 2022
- Bring Baby Event – 11 May 2022 (additional session in October 2022)
- Hot Topics (Red Whale) – Proposal in progress & date TBC
- Pensions especially for newly qualified – September 2022
- Trainer Away Day – 6 July 2022
- Supporting 6th form students with medical school applications – new project, proposal in progress

More info via [info@thegphub.org](mailto:info@thegphub.org).

## GP Later Career Event – Tuesday 17th May 6.30pm-8.30pm

Are you considering your options as you progress towards the later stage of your GP career? Thinking of changing your working arrangements? If so, we would love to welcome you to attend our 'Later Career Event' Angel Bury St Edmunds. Confirm attendance via [info@thegphub.org](mailto:info@thegphub.org).

## Fed ultrasound service

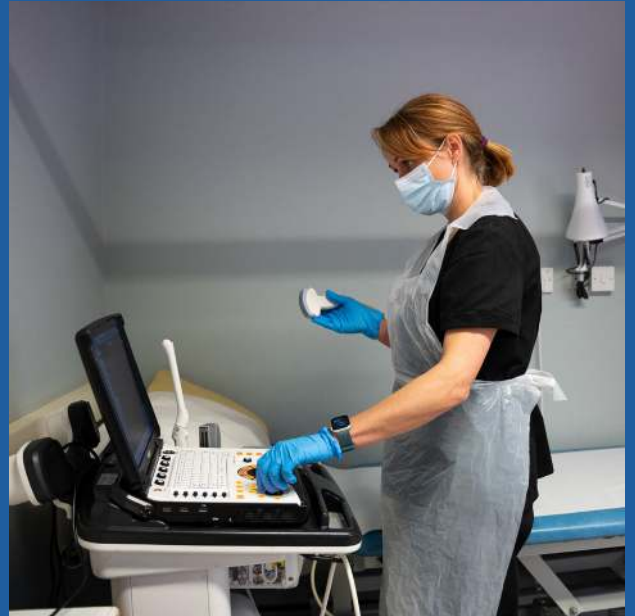
Our community non-obstetric ultrasound service runs from seven locations in East Suffolk. Waiting times peaked, in September 2021, at ten weeks for routine and three weeks for urgent. Referral rates are now back to pre-Covid levels.

Our routine waits are now just over six weeks and urgent just under two weeks. The reduction was achieved by a huge team effort which increased the mean number of scans per month by 23%. Urgent referrals have doubled and now comprise 34%.

In the last three months we received 3,087 referrals. A small number were referred on as outside our scope e.g. neck/thyroid, groin/hernias and MSK. Two thirds were routine six week scans and of these 3.6% were reported back to GP with urgent findings e.g. suspected pathology, chronic bladder retention etc. A third were urgents and 12.9% of these were reported back with urgent findings.

The team would like to feedback some learning to referrers:

- Please give a working diagnosis and ask clinical questions as this helps to guide and focus the scan.
- Ultrasound cannot assess for bowel pathology. If you require an ultrasound to rule out other pathology, as part of a GI referral, then make this clear.
- If you refer for an urgent please tell the patient they will probably need to travel to a base that can fit them in rather



## GP+ open at East Bergholt

Thanks to all the GP+ admin team and Maddie Dunningham our first clinician.



## News in brief

- Reminder Fed non-executive director elections - We are holding elections to replace two GP directors – one West and one Ipswich. If you are interested, please email [david.pannell@suffolkfed.org.uk](mailto:david.pannell@suffolkfed.org.uk) by Monday 2 May 2022.
- Fed sponsoring Trainers Day – after a two year Covid delay, we will be sponsoring the day on Wednesday 6 July 2022 at the Old Ipswichians Cricket Club.