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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf Morgannwg
University Health Board



Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTMUHB_09_26

You asked:

Using the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request the full findings from Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board's recent local pre-implementation assessment of the "All-Wales Ambulance Release Protocol: automatic 45-minute release".

Our response:

Immediate risk to delivery:

CTM strive to hand over ambulances in the quickest possible time frame with exemplary teamwork and robust escalation policies. This translates to being the highest performing Health Board consistently. The 45-minute handover target should be considered a marker of overall health system performance and efficiency and by mostly achieving greater than 90% performance against this target, we believe that our ED system is balancing the delivery of efficiency, quality / safety, patient experience, and financial resource. We appreciate that there are improvements to be made downstream with 12-hour performance, length of stay and pathways of care delay, which will further improve our handover times, and continue to work through initiatives to deliver this.

There remain significant reservations around automatically handing over at 45 minutes ("drop and go"). At present, if we fail to hand over an ambulance at 45 minutes, it's because we have worked through our escalation policy and have exhausted options and require some additional time to execute whole system moves to "safely" accommodate the patient. Through a quality impact assessment, we have accepted a risk tolerance which is reflected in the policy and unfortunately there are times (although infrequent - circa less than 10% of ambulance arrivals) this threshold is exceeded and to delay a handover is the least risky option whilst we work on whole system moves to bring us back into an acceptable risk threshold where we will hand over the ambulance. The Health Board is accountable and accept responsibility for the population within our boundary, whether they are in hospital or in the community. We take this very seriously and our risk assessments reflect this.