

## CLICK'S EMERGENCY CARE PRACTITIONERS (ECPs) URGENT HOME VISIT SERVICE

### What we did

- The 8 GP practices in Crewkerne, Langport, Ilminster and Chard (CLICK) Federation area have established a shared Emergency Care Practitioner Service.
- The scheme involves paramedics undertaking urgent home visits across the Federation area.
- The scheme started May 2016, and involves 3 paramedics who provide around 55 hours per week, Monday to Friday, with shifts commencing around 9.30am to 10.00am
- The sessions were allocated between the practices on an equitable basis. This acknowledged that although larger practices may have more requests for home visits, smaller practices have different challenges in managing home visits from a smaller pool of staff.
- Practices are allocated an average of 2 visits each per day but these are used flexibly depending on demand
- The paramedics undertake between 5 and around 8 visits during a shift depending on factors like location and travel. They are not assigned a specific time in which to undertake the visits
- **The basic process:** Requests for home visits are made by patients or care homes usually between 8.30 and around 11.30am each morning, sometimes later. These are put through to the duty doctor in each practice who decides whether to assign them to the ECPs. The duty GP directs summary printouts with request for home visits to a hub based in 1 surgery. Staff at the hub direct this as emails to the ECPs ipads who then manage and organise their own visiting schedule
- **Contact with GPs:** The ECPs have each of the GPs mobile numbers and can contact them at any time to gain advice or support
- GPs continue to see any patient whose needs require the knowledge, skills and experience of the GP
- Professional Indemnity is organised through Greybrooks. It applies to individual paramedics.



### Ideally

- The paramedics being able to prescribe would be a positive development and save additional time.
- When working for the local ambulance service, paramedics are able to give out a range of medications under Patient Group Directions. Having this flexibility when paramedics are working within primary care would be a significant advance.

### Next steps

- The practices are exploring the potential for the ECPs to undertake non-urgent home visits and further practice-based work, all aimed to help reduce workload on local GPs
- The practices are also considering how to expand the service to develop into an integrated urgent care service incorporating the ECPs, GPs, nursing and other support staff.

### Main outcomes so far

- Urgent home visits which result in emergency admissions to hospitals have reduced from around 20% to around 10% since the scheme started.
- Over 99% of GP referrals are completed by the ECPs without the need for a follow up visit by the GP.
- All 8 practices have reported savings in GP time of at least 1 hour per day as a result of the scheme
- The ECPs, as additional members of the workforce have been able to spend longer with patients at home, and able to carry out comprehensive clinical assessments and spend time assessing underlying health and social care issues affecting patient's health
- Patients have been seen earlier in the day and where admissions to hospital have been required, they have been arranged early in the day.
- Local care home staff have also rated the service highly in terms of its ability to respond quickly and earlier. In turn GPs needing to attend care homes has been a better use of GP knowledge and skills.