

Ref: MM/RB/5618

20 June 2017

Dear colleague

Care Quality Commission reports following inspection of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust in November and December 2016

I am writing to let you know that the Care Quality Commission is today publishing its reports following its inspection of our hospitals in November and December 2016. The overall rating for the Trust is 'inadequate' and the CQC is recommending that we remain in 'special measures' until further review. The Trust has been in 'special measures' since November 2015.

We are disappointed with the CQC's findings, but we fully accept them and are determined to put things right. We are sorry we have let down our patients, their families and carers by not meeting the quality standards they rightly expect. We want all our patients to get the best care possible and regret that this isn't always happening.

One of the problems identified by the CQC was leadership; for many years the Trust's senior posts were filled on an interim basis. We now have a new and permanent leadership team in place, and have made a new start in building on and strengthening the Trust's improvement programme. We are committed to making the changes needed happen as quickly as possible so we can consistently deliver high quality standards for patients across all our services. For example, we have:

- Updated our plans for dealing with significant peaks in the number of patients we see, particularly so patients have a better experience at busier times
- Updated our policy and the way we ensure male and female patients are treated in separate areas when clinically appropriate to do so, making sure we focus on their privacy and dignity
- Improved our systems and processes to make sure medicines are stored correctly and all staff receive full training around administering medicines safely
- Ensured we learn from mistakes when they do occur; with robust systems in place for reporting incidents, and improved induction and training for staff – as per best practice in other hospitals
- Ensured staff have received appropriate levels of training to care for the specific needs of children
- Ensured patients with fractured hips quickly receive the appropriate surgical treatment for their condition in our theatres which improves their experience and their outcomes from surgery
- Introduced a system for senior nurses when they lead audits and reviews on professional standards, to make sure these are consistent across the Trust
- Launched a Trust wide dementia strategy to support staff to better care for the needs of patients with dementia



*Taking **PRIDE** in our health care service*

- Ensured patients with urgent gynecological problems are fast tracked so they are seen quickly and offered the appropriate treatment as soon as possible for their condition
- Implemented new processes to our electronic systems, working with the Regional Safeguarding Board to ensure appropriate levels of safeguarding is in place for children in our care.

I am pleased that the reports acknowledge that we are a caring organisation, rating care across our hospitals as 'good', and our end of life care as 'good'. The inspectors said that services were provided by dedicated, caring staff, and that patients were treated with kindness, dignity and respect and were provided with the appropriate emotional support.

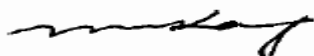
Patients should continue to attend our hospitals for appointments, operations and treatment as planned. We have written separately to patients to explain the situation and allay any concerns they might have. It is aspects of our systems, processes and culture that we must rapidly address. Our staff continue to deliver compassionate care to the thousands of patients who use our services every day. Anything you can do to reinforce the message among your networks that patients should continue to come to our hospitals would be helpful.

We know we can't make all the necessary improvements alone as our hospitals and services are part of a wider health system. So we will continue working together with our partners in the NHS and social care to find new ways to develop safe, high quality, and affordable health and care services for local people.

We still have some way to go before we are delivering the quality that you and our patients expect. We are determined to move forward with pace and focus so we can consistently deliver high quality standards for patients across all our services.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in our organisation and our services. Please do make contact if you would like to discuss further. I will continue to keep you updated on our progress over the coming weeks and months. In the meantime, you can link to the reports and see further information on our website www.worcsacute.nhs.uk.

Yours faithfully



Michelle McKay
Chief Executive

