

## **Response to Medway Foundation Trust (MFT) Quality Account on behalf of Medway Council's Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Senior representatives of Medway NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group have continued to regularly attend Committee meetings during 2016/17 to discuss the challenges facing the Trust.

The Committee received an update from the MFT Chief Executive in June 2016. Members felt that progress had been made on the Trust's recovery programme, while acknowledging that further improvements were still needed. In relation to the Trust's budget deficit of £52.5m in 2015/16, it was acknowledged that the reliance on agency staff needed to be reduced.

The MFT Chief Executive presented a further update to the Committee in November 2016, advising that a further inspection of MFT was due to take place that month. Further progress had been made on implementation of a new Medical Model, which was helping to reduce waiting times, although it was acknowledged that previous attempts to improve quality had not always had the desired impact.

The Chief Executive advised that significant improvements had been realised and MFT was confident that this would enable the Trust to come out of special measures, which it had been operating under for the previous three and a half years. It was anticipated that the Trust would receive a 'Requires Improvement' rating in the forthcoming inspection. It was considered that some of the services provided by the Trust, including neo-natal and children's services, were already good. The Chief Executive had confidence in both the management and clinical leadership of the Trust to continue the improvement journey.

Mortality rates were now in line with national averages, with key lessons having been learned from previous patient deaths. Waiting times for cancer patients were also being normalised. Other positive changes made had included ensuring that complaint logs were being reviewed systemically to identify lessons to be learned, increasing engagement with the community, making the hospital cleaner and the introduction of a smoke free policy across the whole hospital site (since implemented). Patient satisfaction had improved with 85.2% of patients now recommending the hospital, while nurse vacancy rates had improved significantly, from 65% in November 2015 to 23% in September 2016. These had since reduced to 17%. The hospital was now the best performing in the region with regard to ambulance handovers.

Concerns highlighted included the budget deficit of £52 million and that MFT was very concerned about the impact that winter could have on service provision and whether this could be managed effectively. Feedback from staff surveys had identified the existence of a bullying culture, which the Trust was determined to address. There was a determination for MFT to stabilise its financial position with the hospital's recovery plan focusing on delivering greater efficiency and cost reduction, while not compromising on patient safety and quality.

Committee Members recognised that the hospital had made significant progress, while acknowledging that there was still more work to be done.

At its March 2017 meeting, the Committee was briefed on the findings of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection of the Trust, the findings of which were due to be published the next day.

The Committee was reminded that the Trust had been placed in special measures in July 2013 due to concerns with regard to the safety and appropriateness of care being provided at Medway Maritime Hospital. The Trust had been in special measures for 41 months, the longest period of any hospital trust in the country.

The latest inspection undertaken had acknowledged major improvements at the Trust, including sustained improvement in mortality rates and improved care in the emergency department. The care and compassion of staff had also been recognised. Areas highlighted as outstanding included women and children's services and research. The hospital was also proud of achievements made with regard to its fractured hip pathway.

The inspection had identified 13 'must dos' for the hospital to address, compared to the 46 identified in August 2016. Overall ratings included good for caring, good for being effective and good for being well led. Maternity and gynaecology were rated as outstanding for caring, with no services having been rated as inadequate.

An overall rating of requires improvement had been given, with the recommendation to National Health Improvement being that the hospital exited special measures. It was not recommended that the hospital be placed in financial special measures as the hospital was on course to deliver the deficit target it had agreed to for the current year.

It was recognised that the hospital still faced challenges, particularly in relation to workforce, emergency department waiting times, access to elective surgery and cancer treatment, with it being noted that the CQC was due to return for a limited inspection in six months time.

### **General Comments**

- The Committee is very pleased that MFT has received significantly improved inspection ratings, has exited special measures and that improvements have been made to patient safety and mortality rates, which are now in line with national averages.
- The Committee wishes to place on record its thanks to the Chief Executive of the Trust and hospital staff for the work undertaken to achieve this improvement. It is also recognised that the hospital is on an improvement journey and that improvements made so far need to be sustained and embedded, particularly as the Trust's overall rating remains as inadequate.
- The Committee considers that the dialogue between it and representatives from the Trust has been particularly constructive. The Committee looks forward to continuing to provide challenge and to seek assurance that the Action Plan and measures being put in place by the Trust, Commissioners and other partners will make the impact required to ensure that the highest quality of care possible is provided to patients. The Committee also relies on Healthwatch Medway, which is a non-voting committee member, to feed back patient views and experiences.

Councillor David Wildey, Chairman of Medway Health and Adult Social Care  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2016-17

This response to the Quality Account has been submitted by officers, in consultation with the Committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson, under delegation from the Medway Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.