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29 January 2024

Simon Adams
Chief Officer
Healthwatch Worcestershire
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Dear Simon

RE: Access to NHS England's Informed Choice Programme for PSA testing

Thank you for your letter regarding the Informed Choice Programme for PSA testing and for bringing to my attention the findings from the recent surveys conducted in partnership with the Kidderminster & Worcestershire Prostate Cancer Support Group.

This is a difficult and sometimes controversial topic, and uncertainty around the clinical evidence is probably what is being highlighted in your valuable report.

However, I share your concern about the unwarranted variation in patient access. No patient should ever be declined a test they are requesting one and should be provided with all the necessary information to allow them to make their own, informed, choice. Ensuring equitable access to healthcare services is one of our key priorities, and I appreciate your efforts to highlight this issue.

We would expect our clinicians to work with their patients and practice in a way that supports high quality shared decision making and allows personalised care that facilitates the needs of the individual patient.

We will continue to educate our clinicians on this and make sure patients have access to the quality shared decision-making resources provided by trusted sources such as the NHS, Cancer Research UK and Prostate Cancer UK.

To that end we are assuring that practices deliver the contractual requirements under the PCN DES, which asks them to improve early cancer diagnosis and specifically on PSA tests asks:

- *Service requirement 4 - Focusing on prostate cancer, and informed by data provided by the local Cancer Alliance, develop and implement a plan to increase the proactive and opportunistic assessment of patients for a potential cancer diagnosis in population cohorts where referral rates have not recovered to their pre-pandemic baseline.*

Please rest assured that we take this matter seriously, and we are dedicated to ensuring that the Informed Choice Programme is delivered consistently and to the highest standard. I will keep you informed of our progress as we work to improve patient access and experience.

Once again, thank you for bringing this important issue to our attention. Your collaboration in addressing this quality and patient safety matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any further questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Trickett', with a stylized, cursive script.

Simon Trickett
Chief Executive Officer
NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire