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Lisa Emms
Contract Support & Business Advisor
West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

27 April 2018

Dear Lisa

I refer to your invitation of 4 April 2018 to comment on the draft Quality Account of the West Midlands Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust for the financial year 2017/18. Please find below Healthwatch Worcestershire's draft response which will be approved at the company's public Board meeting on 11 May 2018.

Healthwatch Worcestershire's response to the Quality Account of the West Midlands Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust for the financial year 2017/18

Healthwatch Worcestershire welcomes the opportunity to comment of the West Midlands Ambulance Service's Quality Account for 2017/18. Healthwatch Worcestershire's principal concern is that patients who live or work in Worcestershire receive a safe, quality service from the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

1. Do the priorities of the provider reflect the priorities of the local population?

Healthwatch Worcestershire has no direct evidence to suggest that the priorities of the provider do or do not reflect the priorities of the local population. However, from Healthwatch Worcestershire's engagement in Worcestershire's A&E Delivery Board and the STP Partnership Board, both of which are committed to co-producing services with patients and the public, Healthwatch Worcestershire is concerned about the extent to which the West Midlands Ambulance Service is actively seeking to integrate its services with Worcestershire's health care system for the wider benefit of patients as opposed to appearing to solely focusing on its own performance measures.

2. Are there any important issues missed?

Healthwatch Worcestershire welcomes the fact that although the West Midlands Ambulance Service is rated as outstanding by the Care Quality Commission the Trust still acknowledge that lessons can be learnt, and services improved. Healthwatch Worcestershire note's that the West Midlands Ambulance Service is amongst the highest performing ambulance services in all four categories of response and achieved highly in the Ambulance Quality indicators. However, as indicated above Healthwatch Worcestershire is concerned that such performance is not delivered to the detriment of the overall experience of patients in Worcestershire's health care system. Healthwatch Worcestershire suggests that the Trust should provide evidence in its Quality Account that the impact of its performance on Worcestershire's health care system has been considered together with an assessment of its impact.



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As one of Healthwatch Worcestershire's Healthwatch's statutory functions as a local Healthwatch is to enable local people to monitor the quality of health care services in Worcestershire it would be useful if the Quality Account provided information about performance, patient safety and quality at a more local level. Healthwatch Worcestershire appreciates the challenges of meeting response targets in rural areas and understands that the Trust routinely fails to meet those targets in the rural areas of Worcestershire.

Whilst Healthwatch Worcestershire acknowledges that West Midlands Ambulance Service has made considerable investments and changes to its operational model to ensure that in an emergency all patients will be attended by a fully equipped Emergency Ambulance. However, publication of patient safety information at local level in the Quality Account would provide assurance that patients are not experiencing harm because of response times that are outside of the target.

Healthwatch Worcestershire notes that that one of the Priorities for Improvement for 2017/18 was to increase the Friends and Family Test responses and that they are still only at 99 for the year. Therefore, the continued inclusion of this as a Priority for Improvement is welcome. Healthwatch Worcestershire also notes the low numbers of Patient Feedback Surveys received. Again, the targeted Non-Emergency Patient Transport Survey taking place in March 2018 and the efforts to obtain real time feedback from Patients using this service are to be welcomed.

3. Has the provider demonstrated that they have involved patients and the public in the production of the Quality Account?

In the section on Quality Priorities for 2018/19 there is a statement that "In deciding our quality priorities for 2018-19 for improving patient experience, patient safety and clinical quality, we have listened to our patients, staff and other stakeholders. We have done this through engagement events, surveys, compliments, complaints and incident reporting. "

There is no other evidence that patients and the public have been involved in the production of the Quality Account.

Healthwatch Worcestershire would welcome increased opportunity for patients and the public to engage with the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

4. Is the Quality Account clearly presented for patients and the public?

Healthwatch Worcestershire understands the challenges in clearly presenting the Quality Account for patients and the public given the content required by NHS England. None the less the draft Quality Account is long, technically complex and the language used is not always clearly presented for patients and the public. Historically there has been no easy read version available and Healthwatch Worcestershire suggest that the Trust should produce a summary of the Quality Account in an accessible format specifically for patients and the public.

As I have indicated above Healthwatch Worcestershire's response to the draft Quality Account will be formally agreed at our Board meeting on 11 May 2018. If you wish to discuss this draft response, please can you contact me by Friday 4 May 2018.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Adams'.

S Adams QPM
Chief Operating Officer
Healthwatch Worcestershire