

**Healthwatch Worcestershire's response to the Quality Account of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust for the financial year 2022/23 approved at the Public Board Meeting on 25th May 2023.**

Healthwatch Worcestershire has a statutory role as the champion for those who use publicly funded health and care services in the county and therefore, we welcome the opportunity to comment on the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Quality Account for 2022/23.

As is our normal practice we have used Healthwatch England guidance to form our response as follows:

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

Healthwatch Worcestershire believes that the overriding priority of patients, their carers and the public regarding Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust is that the Trust should provide safe, quality, and accessible services at its hospital sites in the county.

We are pleased to see that the Trust has continued with the implementation of the Quality Improvement Strategy and its 3 pillars of quality that were co-produced with stakeholders including patients and the public in 2018: Care that is safe: Care that is clinically effective, and Care that is a positive experience for Patients and Carers.

We have noted there has been measurable progress across many of the improvement priorities identified last year.

We note that **the following targets were met:**

Antimicrobial Stewardship

Baseline position for implementing the sepsis six bundle in the Emergency Department

Relatives contacted by medical examiner team and invited to raise concerns

Outcomes of mortality reviews will be reported and improvement actions developed

Standardised Hospital Mortality Index (SHMI) to remain within the "as expected" range

Participating in a programme of national audits for which we are eligible  
Outcomes of national audits will be reported and improvement actions will be generated and monitored

Eliminating 104 week waits for elective treatment in 2022/23

Develop new Research and Development Strategy  
Work with educational partners to improve the training for our staff during 2022/23

Developing diagnostic access with community hubs and implement care in new purpose built facilities to meet patient needs

Greater engagement with patients and carers through the annual Big Quality Conversation, feeding into yearly priorities increasing Compliments and recommendation rates

Reducing the number of complaints returned from those who are not satisfied with the response

**The following targets were Partially Met**

Rollout of Discharge Production Boards (DPBs) on all inpatient ward areas

Implementing a real-time accessibility information service that supports access to our facilities

Strengthening pathways for patients with Learning Disabilities

Implementing a digital solution that enables patients to provide feedback in real-time

We have also noted the Good News stories includes in the Quality Account

**The following targets were Not Met:**

Reducing Clostridium difficile (C.Diff)

Transition to the Patient Safety Incident Framework

Improvement of the quality of investigation reports, including implementation of the new Patient Safety Investigation standards

Nutrition and hydration assessments

Food diaries and fluid balance charts

Baseline position for screening [for sepsis] in the Emergency Department

Baseline position for screening [for sepsis] in inpatient wards

Baseline position for implementing the sepsis six bundle in inpatient wards

Restoring diagnostic and treatment activity to pre-Covid-19 levels

We appreciate the value of carrying forward those priorities where targets were not met and/or further improvement is likely to continue into 2023/24.

Alternatively some further explanation as to why the target was not met or plans for continued improvement would be useful

**Improvement Priorities 2023/24:**

Healthwatch Worcestershire recognises that the identified improvement priorities for 2023/24 are likely to improve patient experience, safety and outcomes.

In previous years we have welcomed the inclusion of clear numerical targets for the majority of priorities against which progress can be measured and evaluated.

We note that this year SMART targets have not been identified in the Quality Account. We believe that the value of these is demonstrated above, where it is transparent where a target has been met, partially met or not met.

We would like to see SMART targets added to the Quality Account before its final publication.

### **Care that is Safe:**

Healthwatch Worcestershire welcome the continued focus on infection prevention and control, including reducing C. Difficile infections.

We welcome the continued focus on hospital discharge, as in our survey & Hospital Discharge Report we found that it was an area that patients and carers often found challenging. We note that there is no reference in the actions to Discharge Production Boards, although this target was only partially met last year.

### **Care that is Clinically Effective:**

We note the commitment to continuing to learn from deaths and we welcome this.

We recognise that the Trust's involvement in a regular programme of clinical audits and subsequent quality improvement projects is likely to result in better outcomes for patients and welcome the Trust's commitment to this.

One of the clear concerns for patients and the public in Worcestershire is the backlog of care and the waiting times for treatment. We welcome the priority around reducing the time patients are waiting for treatment in line with national targets, and hope that it can be achieved.

### **Care that is a Positive Experience for Patients and Carers:**

We welcome the focus on working with patients with Learning Disabilities, and the priority to improve communication with patients, including those experiencing health inequalities and / or sensory needs

We note the focus on learning from patient feedback on care. We would have expected to see specific mention of learning from patient contact with PALS, and from concerns / complaints under the actions.

## **2. Are there any important issues missed?**

One of the areas of concern raised with Healthwatch Worcestershire and most frequently reported upon in the local media is the pressure on the Accident and Emergency Department, the waiting times and especially Ambulance Handover Times. Whilst we are aware that this is a whole system issue it might have been useful to address some of these concerns within the Quality Account.

Timely identification and treatment of Sepsis: we note that this target was not fully met in 2022/23 priorities, we would welcome its inclusion in the 2023/24 priorities as an important area for patient safety.

We also note that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection and ratings will be reported in the Quality Accounts. It would be useful to know how the identified priorities relate to the areas that were identified as "Requires Improvement" by the CQC.

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

The Trust conducted their third 'Big Quality Conversation' during 2022/23, which included an online survey.

We recognise and welcome the variety of methods of engagement that were used and the events that were held to improve the reach of the Survey. We note that the following people were specifically enabled to participate in the Big Quality Conversation, people from the D/deaf community, people with a Learning Disability, adults with Aspergers Syndrome, and engagement with the local prison service.

It would be useful to understand how many Surveys were completed online and how many through engagement or other methods, and the demographic characteristics of those completing the Survey.

We note that the results from this engagement and the online survey were used to help inform Improvement Priorities for 2023/24.

The QA also state that the 2023/24 priorities have also been formulated through engagement with staff through Divisional Management Teams and Governance Teams.

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

Healthwatch Worcestershire acknowledges that there is a challenge in producing a Quality Account which is clearly presented and meaningful for patients and the public, taking into account the technical information

required by NHS England. Given those restrictions the introduction does clearly set out the purpose and structure of the QA and the infographics pages are an easily accessible picture of the work of the hospital. We think that presentation of the Account has improved this year.

We recommend that the Trust should produce a summary of the Quality Account in an accessible format selecting important information for the public, complemented by an Easy Read version.

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