

NOTES OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1ST AUGUST 2011

1. Resolving N.H.S Complaints – Mid Staffordshire N.H.S Foundation Trust (MSFT)

The Patients Association aims to improve how the Trust deals with complaints at MSFT. The Patients Association has several years' experience supporting patients in making complaints to NHS organisations and has bid successfully to run a two year project at MSFT. Alex Robinson (from the Association) advised that the project aimed to:-

- a) Provide support to individuals – in complaints
- b) Provide some external scrutiny of how the Trust reviewed their own performance
- c) Establish standards for complaints handling
- d) Rebuild public confidence in the Foundation Trust.

There would be four distinct project work streams:-

- i) Expert panel reviews of complaints
- ii) A complaints support service
- iii) Digital story telling
- iv) A complaints survey

The reviews involved clinicians, complaints managers from other organisations, magistrates and representatives from the community. Patient Champions from the community who were trained would be part of the support. Digital story telling is used to teach staff at the Trust and uses true stories told by patients and complainants. The complaints survey had 23 questions to gain views on barriers to the complaints process. Alex Robinson commented on the approaches to build effective relationships with other organisations including local authorities and Local Involvement Networks to avoid duplication with their similar work.

Members commented on the complaints support service and asked about linkage to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), specifically in relation to complainants who wished to remain anonymous due to concerns about future care quality being compromised. Julie Hendry, (Director of Quality and Patient Experience at MSFT), acknowledged the importance of the quality of care and referred to increases in complaints and a number of staff from the Trust under investigation by regulatory bodies. She highlighted that the Trust was committed to developing innovative processes to ensure that lessons were learnt by addressing complaints effectively.

1. Cardiac Rehabilitation Scrutiny Review

An audit by the British Heart Foundation showed that follow up care for heart attack and heart surgery patients had fallen short of the government target. The review had highlighted the fact that cardiovascular disease was the single biggest cause of death in Staffordshire between 2006 and 2008 and that preventative cardiac rehabilitation services could be provided at a lower cost than additional hospital stays. One of the recommendations from the review was that the Director of Public Health be asked to undertake a health equity audit on cardiovascular disease to identify services for phases three and four cardiac rehabilitation and work to review current and planned levels of community investment in cardiac rehabilitation services.

The final report of the review of cardiac rehabilitation would be circulated to the relevant health trusts and local authority bodies for their response to its recommendations.

BRENDA CONSTABLE