

Quarterly Report

Portsmouth Hospitals 
NHS Trust

Best Care, Best People, Best Hospital

A first choice provider of healthcare services to Portsmouth, South East and beyond.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Report Issue 7: April 2009

New Trust Chairman

With an outstanding career in some of the country's leading organisations, the Trust is delighted to introduce our new chairman, Professor David Rhind CBE.

David took up his position on 1 January 2009, after being appointed by the Appointments Commissions in accordance with OCPA Code of Practice. Alongside his new role, David is currently a Non-Executive Director of the Bank of England and the UK Statistical Authority. He is Chair of the Government's Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information and, until July 2007, was the Vice-Chancellor of the City University in London and, prior to that, he was Director General and Chief Executive of Ordnance Survey. He is one of the few people who have been elected both a Fellow of the British National Academy of Sciences (the Royal Society) and of the British Academy, the equivalent UK body for the social sciences and humanities.

Professor Rhind's term runs for four years until 31 December 2012.

'Excellent' quality of services

Patients are receiving the highest possible quality of service from the Trust, which is delighted to have been awarded an "excellent" rating by the Healthcare Commission in its annual health check (2007/08).

The hard work and dedication of staff have led to the Trust being recognised as among the best in the country for the services it provides. Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Health and Professor Sir Ian Kennedy, Chair of the Healthcare Commission, also publicly congratulated the Trust and thanked staff for all that has been done to achieve high standards for patients.

The quality of services rating is a further improvement on the previous two years, when the Trust achieved a "good" rating. The Trust has also maintained its very strong financial position, being awarded a "good" score for the third consecutive year in the use of resources category.

Foundation Trust

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust has announced that it is withdrawing from the process of applying to become a Foundation Trust. The decision of the Board of the Trust has been supported by Monitor, the independent assessor for Foundation Trusts, and South Central Strategic Health Authority who agree that now is not the right time for us to proceed with the application.

The global financial situation has led to an atmosphere of uncertainty and this has left our local health economy in a difficult position. The Trust is working with our Primary Care Trust commissioners to continue to plan future healthcare services in our local area under these difficult circumstances and in this volatile financial climate.

The Trust's immediate focus therefore will continue to be the opening of the new Queen Alexandra Hospital which brings together three existing hospitals on one site and will be one of the most modern and best healthcare facilities in Europe. The development remains on budget and on target to open this summer.

Speaking of the announcement Mr Jim Easton, Chief Executive of South Central Strategic Health Authority said, " We fully support the decision made by Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust to delay its application for

Foundation Trust status. The trust is working hard and it continues to make good progress with its future plans.

"It is clear that the trust is very focussed on delivering high quality services; and we recognise the efforts and desire to accurately and comprehensively reflect these plans in its future application. We also share with them and acknowledge the need for delaying the current application under the present circumstances, and we will naturally continue to work with the trust in helping it to shape its application for submission at a later date."

Chief Executive Ursula Ward said: "The decision does not affect our patients, staff or strategic partners in any way in and business continues as usual. We are committed to becoming a Foundation Trust so that we gain longer term benefits as soon as is appropriate. The Trust will continue to work ever more closely with our Council of Governors to ensure members of the public have a significant voice in decisions affecting future healthcare service provision both in the short term and beyond."

Busy hospital

The last couple of months have been exceptionally busy for the Trust, as well as for our colleagues across the country. This can be explained by the exceptionally cold weather, described by the Met Office as the coldest winter for 30 years. There have been an increasing number of older people attending the Emergency Department with respiratory illnesses and injuries through falling in the slippery conditions.

Despite the exceptional demand, the Trust has not had to cancel elective operations on the scale seen in some other trusts. We have been working closely with our primary care colleagues and social services to ensure that the patient pathway through the hospital is as smooth as possible. We have also worked with the PCTs to raise awareness of how patients can get access to the most appropriate healthcare, and to ensure that the Emergency Department is kept free for those who really need it. (Get the Right Treatment campaign)

New Hospital

Work is continuing on the new extension to the Queen Alexandra Hospital, which is on target to open on June 15, 2009. The state-of-the-art hospital will offer patients world-class facilities in a safe, caring and inspiring environment. The Trust believes that having one of the most modern hospitals in the country will help achieve their aim of providing patients with the best care, by the best people, in the best hospital.

The move has been communicated to staff in a number of ways, including monthly countdown payslip leaflets offering information on specific subjects including travel and details about the future of St Mary's Hospital and Royal Hospital Haslar. The intranet has also been regularly updated and managers have held regular briefings with their staff members.

External communication has focused on media site visits and briefings, and a number of editorial articles are due to be published shortly in local authority magazines. The Trust's own members newsletter, Trust Matters, has also carried articles about the new hospital.

Infection Prevention

Continued efforts to tackle healthcare associated infections, such as Methicillin Resistant Staphyococcus Aureus (MRSA) and Clostridium difficile, have led to dramatic reductions in the number of cases and national recognition. Over the past three years, the Trust has achieved an 80% drop in MRSA infections and a 50% fall in Clostridium difficile cases. A number of initiatives helped to achieve the results including:

- a strict 'naked below the elbow' policy introduced by the Trust in 2007, a year ahead of a similar national campaign. This means all clinical staff wear short sleeves with no wrist watch, bracelets or other jewellery, apart from a plain wedding band. Regular audits are carried out and any non-conforming staff are challenged.
- infection prevention and control staff have been working very closely with primary care colleagues to make sure antibiotics are appropriately prescribed
- improvements in the techniques used for inserting intravenous drips and close monitoring by the intravenous therapy team. This best practice is being shared across the NHS South Central area
- improved cleaning programmes
- an award-winning public awareness campaign, Stop the Bugs, which has helped raise the importance of good hand hygiene among staff and patients
- pioneering use of VitalPAC™ technology, a handheld computer system which records a patient's vital signs and MRSA screening

The magnificent achievement resulted in national recognition, with the Trust being judged as among the best in the country at the first HCAI Technology Innovation Programme Awards. The programme is a joint

initiative by the Department of Health and the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency, which aims to speed up the development and adoption of new technologies to help fight healthcare associated infections.

MRSA Screening

A screening programme is now in place to detect and prevent cases of MRSA. This means that the Trust is fully compliant with Department of Health recommendations which state that relevant patients who are coming in to the hospital for planned treatment should be screened. Meanwhile, the Trust has gone even further by extending the programme to a significant number of emergency patients. This will become compulsory for all hospitals by the year 2011.

Stop the Bugs campaign wins award

The Stop the Bugs campaign, launched in 2008 and aimed at infection prevention and control, recently won the top 'gold' award in the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Wessex region.

In their comments, CIPR judges said "Terrific! Portsmouth Hospitals' campaign showed just how effective a simple, clear message can be. It is consistent, coherent, with some beautiful graphics and excellent visual materials. We particularly liked the use of bus stop posters and bus sides to get the message across to local people travelling to the hospitals to reinforce the message."

The campaign is one of several initiatives launched by the Trust to prevent infections, which are well below national targets and vastly reduced compared to last year.

18 weeks

A new standard came into effect in March 2008 to reduce waiting times to 18 weeks. The Trust was one of the first in the country to achieve this, meaning that 85% of admitted patients and 90% of non admitted patients started hospital treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP.

This challenging standard was extended further in January 2009. The Trust has been working hard to ensure 90% of admitted patients and 95% of non admitted patients are now seen within 18 weeks.

Gosport War Memorial Hospital Inquests

As previously discussed with members of this committee, the Gosport War Memorial Hospital Inquests are now ongoing. The inquests at Portsmouth Combined Courts are examining the deaths of ten patients at the hospital between 1996 and 1999. At the time of these deaths, the Trust with responsibility was Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust, an organisation which now ceases to exist.