**8 August 2017**

Dear patient

***Care Quality Commission reports following a focused inspection of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust in April 2017***

As you may be aware the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has today published reports of its focused inspection of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust which took place in April 2017.

As you may recall, in November and December 2016, the CQC made an announced inspection of our hospitals, as part of its programme of checking that NHS services meet certain standards. The CQC reports following this inspection (which were published in June 2017) gave the full details of the findings and rated the Trust 'inadequate' overall.

The focused inspection which was carried out in April 2017, was to specifically assess whether we had made the necessary improvements in the six weeks from January to March 2017 as required by the Care Quality Commission. No services were rated as a result of this inspection which means that these reports do not impact the CQC's overall rating for the Trust which remains as 'inadequate'.

The CQC identify nine key areas that require significant improvement, they are: learning from incidents, assessing and responding to patient risks, medicines management, infection prevention and control, safety of premises and equipment, bed capacity and patient flow management, safeguarding, fit and proper persons and fitness of equipment.

Whilst we are disappointed, we fully accept the shortfalls the CQC have identified. We are sorry we did not make all the necessary improvements in that period of time and have continued to let you, the people that use our services, down by not meeting the quality standards you rightly expect from us. We want all our patients to get the best care possible and we regret that this isn't always happening, but we are determined to put things right.

We are pleased the Care Quality Commission found a number of improvements since their inspection in 2016 and we have continued to make improvements since the April inspection, for example:

1. We are addressing concerns identified and we have submitted evidence to the CQC – regarding our mental health assessment room in the Worcestershire Royal Hospital which now meets national safety guidance and our Director appointments processes now fully meet the Fit and Proper person regulations (this ensures staff employed by the Trust are suitable to carry out their role)
2. Our infection control procedures have improved, following a review by our regulator NHS Improvement last month, our rating has moved from red to amber which means that we have responded to concerns and are addressing them in a timely manner. The review found there was good hand hygiene, clean and tidy environments and that staff were using appropriate protective equipment
3. Our daily audits are now showing we appropriately assess and respond to potential risks to our patients, for example, each morning our matrons audit compliance in areas such as assessments for venous thromboembolism (formation of blood clots) and ensuring deteriorating patients’ care is escalated, and our pharmacy team undertake audits to ensure variations in fridge temperatures are escalated and missed medication is reviewed. Our most recent audit found that:

o 100% of infants and children admitted to our hospitals received regular clinical observations which were completed accurately to ensure early detection of deterioration and 100% were escalated appropriately, this is completed through a specialised tool called the Paediatric Early Warning Score (PEWS)

o 98% of adults had their vital signs recorded accurately to ensure early detection of deterioration and 100% were escalated appropriately, this has improved from 86%. The assessments were made using a specialist tool called the National Early Warning Score (NEWS)

o 94% of patients have been risk assessed for venous thromboembolism (formation of blood clots) and we have implemented a new process to ensure we improve our re-assessment rates

o 98% of patients have a falls assessment in place to reduce the likelihood of falls during their hospital stay

o 93% of patients have been nutritionally screened and 76% of patients requiring referral to a dietitian have been referred, this has improved from 56%

1. Since May we have recruited 43 consultants and doctors, with a further 34 doctors offered posts following a recent recruitment trip to India. A range of recruitment strategies are underway to further reduce our medical vacancies over the coming months. Permanent staff are critical to improve the quality and safety of care, and provide a better experience for our patients
2. We have strengthened our serious incidents processes and they now comply with national guidance. A system is in place to ensure all learning from serious incident investigations is disseminated across the Trust to improve care and to prevent the likelihood of similar incidents happening again, a recent example includes: the introduction of safety huddles, where staff ‘huddle’ together to discuss safety issues
3. We will have expanded Ambulatory Emergency Care and the Medical Assessment Unit and purchased additional monitoring and diagnostic equipment for the Medical Assessment Unit at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital by winter 2017. This will allow more patients to receive ongoing assessment of their needs and to receive short stay care as well as improving the experience of patients requiring care in the Hospital’s A&E.

Our permanent leadership team are now been in place and have built upon and strengthened the Trust’s improvement programme ensuring the changes needed happen as quickly as possible.

In the meantime, we would like to assure patients that you should continue to use our hospitals as normal. We do not want you to put off seeking advice or receiving treatment from us because of this. It is really important you continue to attend our hospitals for appointments, operations and treatment as planned. Our staff continue to deliver compassionate care to the thousands of patients who use our services every day.

On our website [www.worcsacute.nhs.uk](http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk) are some frequently asked questions that you may want to refer to, and you can also ask our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) for a copy of these. To get more information you can talk to a member of staff, or speak to someone in our communications team on 01905 760453 or via [wah-tr.communications@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.communications@nhs.net)

Whilst we have already made steps in the right direction, we know we still have improvements to make and we are working hard to deliver the highest standards every day in every service for our patients and local communities.

Yours faithfully

**Michelle McKay**

**Chief Executive**