

Commentary on Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust  
Quality Accounts 2018 - 2019

Healthwatch Richmond greatly welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Trust's Quality Account and be consulted on its quality priorities. The draft did not encompass all of the data that will be included in the final report however, we understand that waiting for it to be available would not have allowed us enough time to provide a thorough commentary.

The 53% increase in the number of people sharing their experiences of care and treatment with the Trust is impressive, especially since this has highlighted a near totality of positive feedback regarding the way people felt treated by staff. Nonetheless, from the draft it is unclear whether the latter was determined by staff training, successful recruitment strategies or simply positive attitudes. We therefore encourage the Trust to clarify this information and pursue further patient engagement. Looking beyond internal announcements and publicising through local charity networks like Healthwatch may allow more patients and carers to participate, whilst shedding a light on the reasons behind such responses.

**Priority 1- Improve the management of the deteriorating patient through effective sharing of information**

The introduction of a systematic SBAR framework will help improve referrals of deteriorating patients. Training 80% of staff to use SBAR will also allow them to work with the same standards however, provisional figures in the report did not suggest that the Trust had done enough to achieve its target of SBAR training. Whilst it is not possible to reach a conclusion on whether the Trust had met this objective, the high use of SBAR when referring deteriorating patients was positive. We look forward to hearing about further developments.

**Priority 2- Strengthen the application of evidence-based guidance and research**

The Trust's focus on evidence-based practice is laudable. Specifically, NICE guidelines offer providers an opportunity to align their care to the highest standards, whilst considering individuals' specific conditions, needs and the setting in which they are treated. The Trust has not achieved all targets associated with this priority but the draft report clearly highlighted the challenges surrounding this process and the application of targeted action plans.

High participation in auditing templates seems to indicate that service providers understand the relevance of this priority, whilst patients' engagement in research studies remain lower than expected. In relation to patients enrolled in research studies the narrative around staff involvement and patients' participation seem appropriate and positive. The reasons uptake did not meet targets however remains unclear and we would therefore welcome further clarity around this, as participation to these valuable studies may improve their reliability and results.

Additionally, it would be useful to the reader if the relevant information that comes up later in the report was referenced here.

**Priority 3- Improving patient-centred care through better understanding of what matters to our patients**

We fully support the view that patients' stories are at the heart of patient-centred care. The figures highlighted in the report show that this priority's aim was achieved and surpassed. This was also evident from our work as during the last year we received numerous positive feedbacks from Teddington Memorial Hospital and the responsiveness that we experienced from the Trust when we shared these. These generally originated from frontline staff's ability to treat the public in a professional, kind and friendly manner. Efforts taken in promoting staff satisfaction and retention have clearly impacted positively this area. High quality interventions and clear staff-

patient communication also seemed to counterbalance long waiting times for patients visiting the UTC. Nonetheless, the latter seems to be the alternative of choice for those who are unable to see a GP.

Additionally, we commend the Trust for the actions adopted to improve patient safety. Although safety incidents remain as high as 63.3%, it is clear that reporting, investigating incidents and the Trust's open attitude in maintaining a Duty of Candour are indicative of a positive organisational culture. There seems to be a pattern where the number of patients' incidents vary over time including peaks during summer months. No qualitative information is provided in the report to explain it (e.g. is this simply due to an increase in patient numbers during that time). The Trust's open attitude coupled to patients' feedback collection may provide clarity on this matter.

### **Quality Strategy 2019-2023**

Healthwatch Richmond is enthusiastic about the Trust's future priorities. Given last year's positive achievements in terms of Quality Improvement and evidence development, the Trust's areas of focus for Patient Safety, Clinical Effectiveness and Patient Experience are suitable for the coming year. These priorities draw on creating a culture of openness between staff and patient, whilst taking a holistic, bottom-up approach to improving the local public's health. If the application of evidence-based guidance and research will be maintained and further developed, we are positive about the Trust's prospects of achieving "outstanding" services for our local community.

Finally, we congratulate the Trust for the report and for the "Good" ratings achieved after the last CQC inspection, an admirable success following the previous "Requires Improvement". We look forward to future collaborations in establishing outstanding services to patients, service users, families and carers.