

Assurance report Quality and Safety Committee December 2016

The board will note below three significant challenges to quality which highlight the tension that is arising between achieving intended quality and opportunity to invest:

- managing very long waiting times for psychological therapies
- achieving an appropriate balance of capacity and staffing on the Dementia Assessment Unit
- severe staffing pressures in the Medicines Management team

1. **Deep Dives:** the committee undertook four deep dives

Learning from Incidents: a wide range of services, drawn from all four Business Units, as well as the Administration team, contributed to this deep dive. The committee were assured by the evidence provided as well as their discussion with the presenters that services are integrating exploring and learning from incidents into their day to day business.

Impact of staffing pressures on quality on inpatient wards: the committee were assured that a wide range of actions continue to be taken to increase recruitment to vacant posts, and to achieve good value for money cover to achieve safe staffing. Key issues are unstable teams on wards, impacting on patient experience and morale, and incidents and complaints involving agency staff. Actions have been taken to plan staff rotas a month in advance which has been well-received by staff, and also to minimise the use of external agency staff. Where vacancy hot spots have occurred care has been taken to ensure staff are aware of and are able to access Wellbeing services.

Psychological therapy services: this was a follow-up to a deep dive received by the committee earlier in the year, followed by service re-design work previously reported to the board. There is a very large backlog, with potential waits of years to first appointment despite improvement actions including: creating a single management structure and pathway for IAPT and more specialist psychological therapies, the introduction of defined packages of care, minimising the number of patients who remain in the service for very long periods, increasing group work and increasing the proportion of their time clinicians spend on clinical work.

2. Special report: Dementia Assessment Unit

The committee received an external peer review of staffing on the Dementia Assessment Unit. The report contained many positive comments about the quality of service, commitment of the staff and reputation of the unit. However given the high bed occupancy and the complexity of problems experienced by the service users an increase in staffing was recommended. Associated investment is being discussed with commissioners. If funding cannot be identified it will be necessary to reduce the number of available beds.

3. Annual report: Research and Development

The committee were assured that target timescales for research processes are now being achieved. A research partnership with general practice is being developed and a wide range of research activities being undertaken within the Trust. Staffing pressures, leading to difficulty in maintaining secondment of nursing staff to research projects, are associated with a risk that projects will not be completed and funding withdrawn.

4. Medicines Management interim report: the committee received assurances that all essential medicines management support is in place and welcomed the broadening of the footprint for developing and managing guidelines where prescribing is shared between secondary and primary care. However the medicines management team are currently running at 30% of their expected establishment so that only essential support is in place. Given that there are significant risks associated with prescribing and that the team are becoming anxious about taking leave this is a significant concern. Locum pharmacists are accustomed to being remunerated at levels which would challenge our cap on agency spend.

5. The committee were also assured:
That regular Mortality Review meetings have commenced.
The robust processes are in place to support staff in safeguarding children and adults.