

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL
26 MARCH 2014
NOTTINGHAM CITYCARE PARTNERSHIP COMPLAINTS HANDLING
REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the Panel about how complaints are handled in the NHS, with a particular focus on Nottingham CityCare Partnership; and to provide an opportunity for the Panel to explore how CityCare Partnership uses complaints to address failures, learn and make improvements.

2. Action required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to

- a) use the information provided to inform questioning and discussion about how Nottingham CityCare Partnership listens to and learns from complaints; and
- b) identify what, if any, is the future role for scrutiny in relation to an oversight of complaints.

3. Background information

- 3.1 The Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry (known as the Francis Report) concluded that “all the evidence to show that there were serious issues was present in the complaints, if only that information had been accessed and reacted to appropriately.” Key themes arising from the analysis were:

- The reluctance of patients and those close to them to complain and barriers to the receipt of complaints
- Support for complainants still requiring development
- The feedback, learning and warning signals from complaints not given high enough priority
- Lack of availability of information about complaints to commissioners and local scrutiny bodies
- The case for more independent investigation of complaints investigation

- 3.2 In this context, councillors identified local NHS complaints handling as an issue for further exploration. In November 2013 the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee looked in detail at the complaints handling of Nottingham University Hospitals Trust, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust and the East Midlands Ambulance Service.

- 3.3. A briefing note is attached providing information on the NHS complaints process, the national context and recent research relating to complaints handling in the NHS.
- 3.4 Representatives of Nottingham CityCare Partnership will be attending the meeting to provide an overview of their complaints process and discuss how they use the issues identified through complaints to improve quality and safety. Attached to this report is background information provided by CityCare Partnership about its complaints process and recent complaints data.
- 3.5 Health scrutiny is not a way to resolve individual complaints but the Centre for Public Scrutiny advises that scrutiny should not ignore personal stories and have ways to test whether personal experiences are symptomatic of wider problems – amplifying the voices and concerns of the public where necessary. Trends in complaints data, when triangulated with other evidence can provide a useful indicator of potential issues for further scrutiny. The Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry recommends “overview and scrutiny committees and Local Healthwatch should have access to detailed information about complaints, although respect needs to be paid in this instance to the requirement of patient confidentiality.” The Panel may wish to consider what, if any, is the future role for scrutiny in relation to complaints.

4. List of attached information

- 4.1 The following information can be found in the appendix to this report:

Appendix 1 – NHS Complaints Handling: Briefing Note

Appendix 2 – Information provided Nottingham CityCare Partnership

5. Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

None

6. Published documents referred to in compiling this report

Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry 2013

Report to and minutes of the meeting of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee held on 12 November 2013

7. **Wards affected**

All

8. **Contact information**

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