

12 August 2014

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Dear Steve

Thank you for your two recent reports (*HealthWatch Kent: Mental Health in Focus. The experience of patients and their families following the closure of mental health beds in Medway and the transfer to Kent*) and your subsequent (*Enter and View visit report to Sapphire Ward, Littlebrook Hospital, Dartford*).

Firstly, I think it is important to acknowledge how useful your work with us is. We, as an organisation strive to listen, learn and improve and as you know patient, service user and carer feedback is a critically important part of this.

The first report very much focussed on the move of Sapphire Ward from Medway to Dartford following the outcome of the Public Consultation. We are considering your reports and will continue to do so beyond the 10 days you gave us to reply. We have been able to respond to each of your recommendations and these are set out below:

- **Learn from the experiences raised in this report to ensure a better experience for patients on Emerald Ward who will shortly be moved.**

As a result of the listening, learning, improving initiative established by KMPT, in March 2014 Swale appointed a service manager directly responsible for community mental health services in that area, ensuring that the focus is predominately on the people of Swale. There is now regular contact between the Swale CMHT and the Medway/Swale CRHT to ensure that there is a seamless service between the acute and community service lines.

The service manager of the Swale CMHT is investigating the possibility of Carers receiving personal budgets through direct payments this will help with transport costs.

The Acute Service Manager in Maidstone is the project lead for the new ward development to enable Emerald ward to move next year. As part of this project she is working closely with Emerald ward and has a programme of change to support the patients and their carers in their move to a new ward. She is working in collaboration with the Trust's Organisational Development Team to ensure a new culture is embedded and lessons can be learnt from the move to Sapphire Ward. Your report will provide a focus for the plan that is in place.

- **Establish a clear way to communicate regular updates to patients, families, carers and other organisations**

Swale CMHT are establishing a carers group in September which will be jointly facilitated by the service manager; this will allow better communication with carers across the Swale area; the team will also seek to strengthen their links with the service user forum in Swale, currently the contact is mainly through the MHAG however the service manager will extend an invitation to the service user forum to attend the local leadership group. In June the Swale CMHT took part in the 15 step challenge this included service user representatives an action plan was produced with support from the Executive Director of Nursing and Governance and the action plan is being implemented, the team plan to invite service users and carers to comment on the building once the action plan is complete. There is currently a leaflet in production that will be available to service users and carers that will ensure that all stakeholders will be aware of what is available to them and their loved ones, e.g. personal budgets, 'Buddy App' Patient Portal, Carers assessments etc.

The project board for the new Emerald Ward has service user representation to inform project decisions and reflect service user views. The Acute Service Manager in Maidstone will ensure that there is effective communication now with service users and carers to ensure that the transition for the move is managed smoothly in the future. A communications plan will be developed and shared with the MHAG so service users and carers do not feel ill informed.

- **Work closer with locally based Forums and Groups such as the county wide Mental Health Action Group to help assist two way communication and dialogue.**

The Swale Community Service Manager and the Medway and Swale Acute Service Manager, represent the Trust at the Swale MHAG; the PPCI team are regular attendees at the Kent wide MHAG and issues are reported back through the Patient Consultative Committees (PCC), Carer Consultative Committee (CCC) and Trust Wide Patient Experience Group (TWPEG). Both the Acute and Community Service Managers attending the MHAG are very willing to liaise with service users, carers and non-statutory organisations in relation to services and service provision.

- **Have a clear process of how the organisation listens to patients, families and carers about the impact of service change and amend their plans accordingly.**

There are several different ways that KMPT listens to stakeholders and encourages input from service users, carers and families in relation to service provision these include:

Patient Consultative Committees - these meet bi-monthly in east Kent, west Kent, and Dartford and Medway, are facilitated by the Patient Public and Community Involvement Team and report back to KMPT through the TWPEG.

These have been strengthened recently with attendance now including Executive Management Team representation and local Managers.

Carer Consultative Committee – this group meets in east Kent bi-monthly is facilitated by the Patient Public and Community Involvement Team and report back to KMPT through the TWPEG.

Trust Wide Patient Experience Group (TWPEG) – this is a monthly meeting that report to the KMPT Quality Committee is chaired by the Executive Director of Nursing and Governance and has both a service user and a carer as core members of the group.

Friends and Family Test Question - KMPT has been rolling this out across the organisation since January 2014 and will continue to embed this feedback mechanism throughout the organisation.

Suggestion boxes – there are suggestion boxes across the organisation on both wards and within Community Mental Health Teams to allow stakeholder to feedback concerns and compliments.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) - this is a service within the Patient Experience Team (PET) that allows stakeholders to contact KMPT via telephone, email, website and written correspondence to highlight issues relating to care and services. This is an informal service which allows prompt responses to immediate concerns.

PALS volunteers – KMPT has a group of volunteers that attend the wards in Canterbury to talk to patients about all aspects of their care, if any concerns are raised the volunteers bring the issues to the PET who then deal with them in the same way as all other PALS concerns.

Surveys – a variety of surveys are carried out throughout KMPT some on an on-going basis and some as one-off pieces of work; in April 2014 the Expert by Experience Group carried out a survey on Sapphire Ward and we are very happy to share the results with HealthWatch.

National Patient Survey – this is an annual survey carried out on behalf of the CQC and KMPT uses the results to inform the service line Patient Experience Action Plans.

Listening, Learning and Improving Group – this group gathers all of the learning from the variety of methods listed above and ensures that it is disseminated throughout the organisation.

In addition, it is important to note the recent 'Rethink' Report that clearly stated the Trust had improved considerably in listening to patients over the last three years.

- **Urgently examine their complaints process to make it easier for patients, families and carers to make complaints where necessary.**

It is disappointing to hear that some stakeholders feel that it is difficult to make a complaint; KMPT works to the national guidance provided by the Department of Health 'Making Experience Count'. The team works in partnership with complainants to achieve as reassuring a process as possible; however the Patient Experience Team are constantly reviewing the process to make it as accessible as possible. HealthWatch has agreed to 'get more detail on what was said about complaining' once this information has been provided the PET will look again at the complaints process.

- **Work to make the KMPT website easier to use and understand**

As HealthWatch is aware and has acknowledged the Trust has already commissioned an audit of its website involving many different stakeholders, including users and carers.

As a result of the audit, the Trust has gone out to tender to appoint a specialist company to assist it with the development of an entirely new website that will be very easy to use and fully meet the stated requirements of users, carers, professionals, staff and the wider communities it serves. The Trust is aiming to have the new site operational by end 2014.

In the meantime improvements are constantly being made and following feedback from Medway HealthWatch a section of services available in Medway is now in place.

- **Undertake an urgent review of what is really happening to patients in A&E and crisis situations. HealthWatch Kent can help with this.**

Medway and Swale CCGs have recently committed further investment to the Liaison Psychiatry Service provided within Medway Hospital to ensure a service across the 24/7 period. Recruitment is underway and once there are substantive staff in post there will be an improved response to patients attending A&E and education and training for A&E staff in how they respond to those with a mental health problem. The service line is also working in collaboration with South East Coast Ambulance Service to ensure those who present in crisis are provided with appropriate crisis support in the right place and are not taken unnecessarily to A&E.

Following a review of staffing across the Trust CRHT Teams Medway/Swale CRHT was recognised to have pressures on staffing to respond to demand. A re-allocation of resources has created an additional 8 qualified nurse posts which are vacant posts but being recruited to.

The Acute Services are working closely with Medway and Swale CCGs over the next year to develop a single point of access for those requiring urgent mental health support; this includes a review and re-modelling of the current urgent response provided by the CRHT Team as well as that provided within Community Teams for both younger and older adults. The Trust will be seeking feedback from Service Users and Carers on these plans.

It will be very helpful to hear from HealthWatch how they can help us with improvements to the urgent care pathway.

- **Ensure HealthWatch Kent is kept up to date with all initiatives and plans for improvements.**

As HealthWatch are aware the Trust has established regular quarterly meeting with members of HealthWatch to ensure that the 2 way flow of information continues. If consultation events and/or service change are planned between those meetings documents are shared electronically for comment e.g. The Communities of Excellence Consultation document.

We see this as critically important and look forward to continuing to work closely with HealthWatch on listening and continuing to improve our services.

I am please to note that following your Enter and View Report of Sapphire Ward a number of issues raised in your first report were not found to be concerns on the wards. These included:

- Unanimous improvements in patients having their own room and shower and toilet *“all of the respondents valued having their own room and their own shower and toilet. Those who had been in Medway, felt that this was a big improvement on the 6 bed wards there”*.
- *“The majority of patients said that they felt safe and 10/12 were happy being on a mixed ward”*.

- *“The food was rated highly by all respondents”.*
- *The staff and the care provided were generally praised”.*

The feedback on Sapphire Ward following your Enter and View Visit is also being considered. As you have acknowledged actions are already underway. However, I can confirm wifi is being installed onto the ward, a welcome pack is in place and OT activities can be accessed out of hours (we are looking at how we can work with staff to encourage this). We would also welcome a further Enter and View visit in the future.

I hope this has provided you with the assurance needed that we are taking the valuable feedback from your reports and continuing to embed them into our on going plans.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AMcNab', written in a cursive style.

Angela McNab
Chief Executive