



HOSC scrutinises Trust response to CQC

HOSC has questioned senior representatives of East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust about their response to concerns raised following a recent inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).



In February 2011 CQC visited five local hospitals run by the Trust – in Eastbourne, Hastings (the Conquest), Uckfield, Bexhill and the Crowborough Birthing Unit. Their reports, which were published in May, raised concerns about aspects of the care provided to some patients, particularly at the main district general hospitals in Eastbourne and Hastings.

Steve Tinton, the Interim Trust Chairman, and Darren Grayson, Chief Executive, stressed the Trust's determination to provide high quality care and meet all the essential standards required by CQC. Mr Grayson outlined actions the Trust had already put in place which included:

- Expansion and redesign of A&E units and the recruitment of additional consultants and Emergency Nurse Practitioners to boost staffing at the units.
- Improvements to patients' privacy and dignity.
- Recruitment of additional nurses to fill vacancies.

Mr Grayson acknowledged that some of the issues raised by CQC would take longer to address fully, such as making significant improvements to record keeping and sustaining privacy and dignity in a busy hospital environment. Cultural change would be required to address some long-standing issues highlighted by CQC.



HOSC sought assurances on specific areas including the actions in place to retain and support nursing staff, leadership by clinical staff in A&E and ensuring staff receive required training in the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

The Committee questioned the Trust about how record keeping would be improved in light of CQC's finding that not all patient records had been completed according to Trust procedure. Deputy Chief Nurse Shotham Kamath explained that a working group had been set up to oversee this area and weekly audits were being undertaken to ensure improvements were made. The working group would look at reducing the burden of paperwork and helping staff to be clear about priorities.

Monitoring progress

CQC will be monitoring the Trust's progress closely over the coming months and HOSC does not wish to duplicate their work unnecessarily. However, the Committee will be holding the Trust to account on behalf of local people to ensure that essential standards of care are met and maintained.

Councillor Rupert Simmons, HOSC Chairman, said, "CQC has raised significant issues which are of concern to HOSC and local people. I am pleased that the Trust's leadership has given the Committee a clear commitment to take the action required. HOSC will keep in contact with CQC in order to monitor progress".

Focus on nutrition in local hospitals



HOSC has received the first in a series of progress reports on nutritional care in local hospitals.

The Committee completed a review of nutrition, hydration and feeding in Autumn 2010. The review made a number of recommendations, all of which were accepted by the local hospital Trusts, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust and Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust. Both Trusts provided progress reports which were considered by HOSC at the Committee's June meeting.

Joy Churcher, Head of Dietetics and Matthew Hutchinson, Associate Chief Nurse, at Brighton & Sussex Hospitals

Trust outlined a range of initiatives taken by the Trust to improve nutritional care including:

- A multi-coloured lid scheme for water jugs, to more easily identify those needing extra help to stay hydrated.
- Improvements in the proportion of patients screened for malnutrition on arrival.
- A 'spot it and stop it' campaign run as part of a nutrition awareness month.
- Review of menus at the Princess Royal and Sussex County Hospitals.
- Introduction of 'comfort rounds' which ensure basic nursing checks are undertaken for all patients at set times each day, including prior to mealtimes.

The Trust has also been undertaking monthly surveys on whether appropriate assistance is provided to patients needing help with eating. These are being analysed to identify how improvements could be made.

Shotham Kamath, Deputy Chief Nurse at East Sussex Healthcare Trust, with colleagues from the dietetic and catering teams, highlighted the following actions taken by the Trust in response to HOSC's report:

- Ongoing training for staff on malnutrition screening.
- Purchase of assisted cutlery which helps patients feed themselves.
- A successful trial of an extended choice menu which had resulted in a reduced number of referrals to the dietetic team.
- Improvements to nutritional information in patients' notes.

The Trust recognised that it would be beneficial to have a more standardised approach to mealtime routines and had started work on this. The protected mealtimes initiative was also due to be re-launched to improve the number of wards complying with this approach.

Both Trusts confirmed that they were sharing their ideas and initiatives in this area in line with HOSC's recommendation that they could learn from each other.

Cllr Simmons said, "HOSC is pleased to see the progress made so far, but will expect to see further improvement. Nutrition is of critical importance, not just in itself, but because good nutritional care is part of good all-round patient care on the ward which preserves people's privacy and dignity." The Committee will review progress again in March 2012.

Children's heart surgery consultation

HOSC contributed to a joint response from HOSCs in the South East to a national consultation on changes to children's heart surgery.

The consultation recommended reducing the number of hospitals in England which perform very specialist children's heart surgery in order to improve standards and proposes that these specialist centres work with other local hospitals in a network to provide ongoing care.

The HOSCs' response recognised that most patients in the region already travel to London for surgery and will continue to under the plans. HOSCs suggested that the focus here should be on improved outreach services so that more care can be provided closer to home.

Contact Claire Lee on 01273 481327 for a copy of the full HOSCs' response.



'Shaping the Future' at East Sussex Healthcare



In June, the Chief Executive of East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, Darren Grayson, updated HOSC on the development of Trust's Clinical Strategy. The Strategy, known as 'Shaping our Future', will set out the Trust's future direction and its approach to developing its services over the next 5 years.

Mr Grayson told the Committee that the work done so far indicated that a range of services would need to change in some way. These include cardiology (heart services), stroke services, emergency services and maternity care. The Trust is developing options for how these services could change in the future and intends to discuss these with HOSC and the public, with consultation on any major changes to follow.

Maternity Review

The strategy development work includes the Trust's review of maternity services. Amanda Harrison, Director of Strategy, outlined the review process which was being led by an independent senior midwife and an independent Chairman with no maternity background. HOSC requested confirmation that independent medical advice was also being sought. Dr Harrison confirmed that external consultant obstetrician and paediatrician advice was being obtained. She also assured the Committee that processes were in place to ensure the day to day safety of maternity services, but the review would examine the Trust's ability to continue to do this in the long term.

HOSC will receive a further report on the likely proposals for changes to services arising from the strategy in September 2011.

Stroke care in the spotlight

A mixed picture on stroke care emerged at the recent HOSC meeting when the Committee questioned representatives from NHS Sussex (who commission stroke services) and East Sussex Healthcare Trust.

HOSC welcomed the progress which had been made in recent months such as the opening of a specialist rehabilitation unit at Bexhill Hospital and the achievement of targets for stroke patients to receive a prompt brain scan when they are admitted to hospital.

The Committee also welcomed an imminent increase in the number of specialist stroke consultants from two to four at East Sussex Healthcare Trust. Dr James Wilkinson, Divisional Director, assured the committee that recruitment for one of the additional posts had begun and the second was due to be approved in the new few months.



However, Committee members challenged the NHS representatives on the relatively low number of stroke patients spending most of their time in hospital being cared for in the specialist stroke units. When asked whether the stroke unit beds could be reserved for stroke patients only (rather than taking patients with other conditions) Dr Wilkinson argued that this was difficult to achieve in a busy hospital where there would always be unforeseen pressures. Dr Wilkinson suggested that access to stroke beds was more likely to improve if hospital and community services were working in harmony, enabling patients to move on from acute care to rehabilitation in a timely way and this was the Trust's focus. He anticipated a significant improvement by the end of the financial year.

Councillor Rupert Simmons, HOSC Chairman, said, "Stroke care is a real priority for East Sussex given our older population and there is clear need to modernise stroke services. I'm pleased to see the focus being given to this area, but HOSC will want to see progress sustained and accelerated where possible."

The Committee will receive a further progress report in March 2012.

News in brief

Health and Wellbeing Board

East Sussex County Council is currently consulting on plans to establish a shadow Health and Wellbeing Board from Autumn 2011. These Boards, proposed as part of the government's reforms to the NHS, will bring together local councils, NHS commissioners and public representatives to assess local needs and develop a health and wellbeing strategy for the area. The consultation proposes that the East Sussex Board should be the 'guardian of the whole health and social care system' and seeks views on the proposed membership, remit and structure of the Board. For more information go to:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/consultation/current.htm

HOSC membership changes

New Members joining HOSC from May 2011 are Cllr Rupert Simmons, Chairman (pictured right), Cllr John Ungar, Eastbourne Borough Council and Cllr Elayne Merry, Lewes District Council.



Cllr Simmons commented, "My sincere thanks to those Members leaving HOSC for their considerable contributions, particularly Sylvia Tidy who has chaired the Committee with tremendous skill and dedication for the past four years. I look forward to building on her considerable legacy in these changing times."

Next HOSC meeting

10am Thursday 15th September 2011 at County Hall, Lewes

For webcast recordings and meeting details see our website: www.eastsussexhealth.org

HOSC Members – August 2011

East Sussex County Council:

Cllr Rupert Simmons – Chairman
Cllr David Rogers OBE – Vice Chairman
Cllr Carolyn Heaps
Cllr Philip Howson
Cllr Ruth O’Keeffe
Cllr Peter Pragnell
Cllr Barry Taylor

East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK):
Ms Janet Colvert

Eastbourne Borough Council:

Cllr John Ungar

Lewes District Council:

Cllr Elayne Merry

Rother District Council:

Cllr Angharad Davies

Wealden District Council:

Cllr Diane Phillips

Voluntary Sector (1):

Maurice Langham, East Sussex Seniors Association

Voluntary Sector (2):

Dave Burke, Hastings and Rother Counselling and

Julie Eason, East Sussex Advice Plus (role-share)

Contact: Claire Lee, Scrutiny Lead Officer

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East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is managed by East Sussex County Council and works in partnership with Eastbourne Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council

