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NHS FORTH VALLEY: 2015/16 ANNUAL REVIEW

1. This letter summarises the main points discussed and actions from the Annual Review and associated meetings held within the Learning Centre, Forth Valley Royal Hospital on 30 August 2016
2. I would like to record my thanks to you and everyone who was involved in the preparations for the Annual Review Programme, and also to those who attended the various meetings. I found it a very informative day and I hope everyone who participated also found it worthwhile.
3. I began with a tour of the Women and Children's Unit, where I met staff and patients in the children's ward and I heard about the 'What Matters to Me' programme which gives children the opportunity to highlight issues that matter most to them, both in hospital and at home. It also helps staff learn about the child's life, providing common ground to support communications. I then met local staff from both the Area Clinical Forum and Area Partnership Forum and was grateful to them for taking the time out of their busy schedules to share their views with me. It is clear from our discussions that local relationships remain strong and that both Forums and the Board are well placed to address both outstanding challenges and those that lie ahead, in effective partnership.

Area Clinical Forum (ACF) Meeting

4. My discussion with the ACF was positive and interactive. I was reassured that NHS Forth Valley continues to actively support the Forum, with arrangements in place to facilitate participation. I was pleased to hear that effective links to the senior management team are in place and that, in general, effective engagement and communication are appropriately prioritised. It was clear that the Forum has a determined focus on clinical quality and innovation to promote patient safety.

5. Members of the Forum highlighted the good work being undertaken as part of the 'Assuring Better Care Framework', a nurse led initiative to further improve patient experience. I was equally heartened to hear of the positive reaction to the expansion of the role of community pharmacists who now are able to offer advice, when appropriate, to the people of Forth Valley rather than sign posting them to GPs. We also discussed in detail the hard work staff undertaken by staff in relation to the psychological therapy pathways over the last 12 months, the improvements the introduction of multi-disciplinary teams within GP surgeries had made, challenges and opportunities relating to psychological services across Forth Valley and the improvements the introduction of multi-disciplinary teams within GP surgeries had made, and the work being carried out with colleagues in the Integration Joint Boards.

Area Partnership Forum (APF) Meeting

6. I had a wide ranging and informative discussion with the members of the APF. Amongst the issues we considered was the excellent relationship between all levels of management and staff within the Board. We then discussed the continuing successful roll out of the iMatter Programme, the positive results the Scottish Safety Patient Programme was delivering and the successful introduction of a Modern Apprentices and Youth Framework by the Board. I was also particularly interested to hear progress on the development of a single joint staff side forum for both Integration Joint Boards within Forth Valley.

Patient / Public Group Session

7. I very much value the opportunity to meet with patients and patients' groups and firmly believe that listening and responding to their feedback is a vital part of improving health services. I greatly appreciated the openness and willingness of the people present to share their experiences and noted the specific issues raised, including the need for an efficient flow of information between primary and secondary care in light of the integration of health and social care, and the newly instituted virtual fractures clinic which is designed to prevent frequent attendances to the hospital. The need to ensure that appropriate services are in place for those under 65 years of age with chronic conditions was also considered. In terms of equality and diversity, a number of points were highlighted including the need to ensure a gender balance for GPs and clinicians and the ongoing consideration being given to improving access to signers for patients who are profoundly deaf and unable to lip read. We had a good discussion around patients not turning up for appointments and the impact this can have upon GP surgeries and outpatient clinics overall. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the patients who took the time to come and meet with me.

Annual Review Session

8. Ministers have listened to feedback from members of the public at Annual Reviews in recent years who called for a more focussed public discussion of the key issues, ahead of the opportunity to ask questions.

As such, Ministerial Reviews are undertaken in 2 sessions – the first, in public, with the Minister setting the scene and context for the discussion before the Board Chair delivers a short presentation on key successes and challenges facing the local system. This is then followed by the opportunity for attendees to ask questions of the Minister and Health Board.

9. The second session is held in private between the Minister and the full Health Board. This is a more detailed discussion of local performance in delivering the six Quality Outcomes and offers Ministers the opportunity to reflect on the experience of the day whilst also testing how Board Non-Executives are able to hold the Executive Team to account. This letter provides a detailed summary of the discussion and resulting action points.
10. As in previous years, all Boards are expected to submit a written report to Ministers on their performance over the past year and their plans for the forthcoming year. I note that NHS Forth Valley self-assessment paper gives a detailed account of the specific progress the Board has made in a number of areas and that it is available to members of the public on the NHS Valley website. I have highlighted some of these key areas of challenge and success below.

Annual Review – Public Session

11. You started the public session with a brief presentation which reiterated the Board's clear focus on delivering care and treatment of the highest standard for the people of Forth Valley. You provided a helpful summary in relation to a number of performance standards the Board has met in a sustainable manner during the previous 12 months and how this was being driven forward by remaining person centred, focussing on patient experience. In particular, I glad to hear of the positive impact the NHS Forth Valley Strategic Quality Improvement Programme is having, coupled with a number of similar initiatives such as the successful roll out of the Scottish Patient Safety Programme and your focus on infection control, which has led to improvements for key target areas.
12. I was very interested to learn of the Board's clear focus on prevention, which has seen a number of successful initiatives in relation to addiction issues, most notably on alcohol and drug misuse. It was also heartening to hear of the great work being undertaken by the Forth Valley Immunisation Team which has successfully implemented the Childhood Vaccination Programme for a host of diseases including diphtheria, typhoid and polio, a seasonal flu programme which saw the delivery of 119,400 vaccinations as well as specialised immunisations such as Hepatitis B and whooping cough. Please pass on my thanks to the members of the Team for the important work they are doing.
13. You then moved on to outline the importance that staff experience has on quality of care patients receive. NHS Forth Valley has a proven track record in the development of its staff and you reminded the audience that you currently have a Silver Investors in People Award, the only Board in NHSScotland to do so.

Finally you moved on to say that the Board was clearly focused on the challenges facing Forth Valley going forward and was introducing a number of initiatives for waiting times, mental health, emergency care and delayed discharge.

14. Following the introductory presentations we took a number of questions from members of the public on a range of subjects including challenges around public transport links to the Forth Valley Royal Hospital, the retention of clinics within the Clackmannanshire Community Hospital, the recruitment and retention of specialist clinicians, the potential impact that Brexit could have upon staff numbers within the Board and the opportunities to deliver improved support to carers. I am grateful to you and the Board Team for your efforts in this respect, and to the audience members for their attendance, enthusiasm and considered questions.

Annual Review – Private Session

Health Improvement and Reducing Inequalities

15. NHS Forth Valley is to be commended for exceeding its target for the delivery of Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABIs) during the period 2008 to 2016, delivering 141% of the agreed number. In terms of smoking cessation, available data shows that during 2015/16 NHS Forth Valley achieved 118% of their annual target supporting 259 people in the most deprived areas to meet the 12 week milestone. I am aware that the Board continues to prioritise actions to reduce the harmful effects of smoking which include the Forth Valley wide 'Smoke Free Homes and Cars Campaign', with raising and awareness events supporting this agenda throughout 2015/16.

Clinical Governance, Patient Safety and Infection Control

16. Rigorous clinical governance and robust risk management are fundamental activities for any NHS Board, whilst the quality of care and patient safety are of paramount concern. I am aware that there has been a lot of time and effort invested in effectively tackling infection control and note that the Board achieved the *C.diff* HEAT standard to deliver a rate of 0.32 cases per 1,000 total occupied bed days by March 2016.
17. The Board missed the *staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia* (SAB) infections standard to deliver a rate of 0.24 cases per 1,000 acute occupied bed days by March 2015. A rate of 0.39 was achieved for the year 2015/16 and I would expect the Board to take all appropriate actions to ensure improvements are made in this area over the coming months. I am aware that infection control is a priority issue for the Board. In particular, each SAB case is investigated to identify the cause of the infection with a full root analysis performed to help identify any issues that are, or may potentially be related to the SAB acquisition. To help drive forward improvements, a monthly report on infection control is given to all staff. I look forward to the impact these initiatives has on SAB rates going forward.

18. The Healthcare Environment Inspectorate carried out an inspection of the Clackmannanshire Community Healthcare Centre in January 2016. This resulted in zero requirements or recommendations. Please pass on my congratulations to staff for such a marvellous outcome.

Improving Access, including Waiting Times Performance

19. I note NHS Forth Valley's overall performance against the 4-hour A&E target has shown variation. The National Unscheduled Care Team is working with the local team in NHS Forth Valley to help accelerate implementation of the new six essential actions approach to sustainably improving unscheduled care and ensuring best practice is installed throughout your hospital system. As part of this process NHS Forth Valley is focusing on increasing the percentage of patients being discharged earlier in the day and over the weekend whilst also exploring how best to match capacity with recognised spikes in demand. I would expect to see positive effects in the coming months.

20. During 2015/16 NHS Forth Valley had a consistent approach to high quality care, clinical prioritisation and timely service provision. However, the Board has been unable to maintain compliance against the 18 weeks Referral to Treatment (RTT) during the year with performance remaining below the Scottish average. Likewise, NHS Forth Valley has experienced pressures in relation to Treatment Time Guarantee (TTG) in 2015/16. I am aware that you are looking at a number of initiatives including a review of capacity and sustainability plans across specialities. Please keep the Scottish Government Access Support Team informed of the outcomes of these initiatives.

21. I was pleased to learn that the Board has sustained above 95% performance over the year against the 31-day cancer access standard. However, delivery of the 62-day cancer access standard has fallen below 95% for 3 of the last five reported quarters. Working with my officials, NHS Forth Valley has identified a range of performance challenges across a number of pathways, in particular for its breast, lung and urological cancer pathways. To recover performance, the Board has introduced specific actions, such as increasing scope and diagnostic capacity, particularly for those patients on the breast, colorectal, lung and urology cancer pathways. These actions are now realising improvement gains and I would be grateful if you could keep my officials informed of your continuing progress.

22. I am aware of the hard work and dedication of your staff within your Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. However, performance by NHS Forth Valley has declined across the course of the last 12 months and is currently the lowest of any Board in Scotland, with 44.2% of patients seen within 18 weeks during the period January to March 2016. You have advised that you anticipate an improvement in performance by 31 December 2016 due to a number of initiatives the Board has introduced, such as the redesign of the service pathway leading to increased capacity. I look forward to seeing the fruits of these initiatives.

23. The Board is experiencing similar issues in relation to the 90% standard for access to Psychological Therapies; achieving 78.8% of cases seen within 18 weeks for the last quarter of 2015/16. A number of initiatives are being taken forward to improve performance, including the undertaking of a recent recruitment campaign to fill vacancies and the implementation of a redesign plan, which will see a reduction in points of access and waiting lists, resulting in a more effective use of current resources. I look forward to confirmation that work to speed up access to this key service has resulted in sustainable delivery of the 18 week standard.

The Integration of Health and Social Care

24. I welcome the commitment of the Board and its Local Authority partners to the effective implementation of integrated health and social care partnership arrangements with both the Falkirk and the Clackmannanshire and Stirling Partnerships becoming fully functional on 1 April 2016.

The Best Use of Resources, Including Workforce Planning and Financial Management, as well as Service Redesign

25. Effective attendance management is critical - not only in terms of efficiency but also to ensure good support mechanisms are in place for staff. At 5.10% for the year to March 2016, NHS Forth Valley sickness absence rate remained above the 4% standard, but marginally below the average rate for Scotland for the same time period. I recognise the efforts the Board is making to support its staff and would encourage you to continue its focus on minimising absences.

26. I would expect NHS Boards achieve both financial stability and best value for the considerable taxpayer investment made in the NHS. I am, therefore, pleased to note that despite a challenging year NHS Forth Valley met all three of its financial targets for 2015/16, delivering a small surplus of £0.2 million, as well as delivering its efficiency savings target for the year, £13.7 million. In terms of infrastructure investment, a key element of the Board's programme during 2015/16 was a £1.4m investment in improvements for adult mental health facilities at Falkirk Community Hospital, £1.6m for medical equipment and £1.4m on eHealth projects.

27. Clearly, overall economic conditions mean that public sector budgets will continue to be tight whilst demand for health services will continue to grow. Nonetheless, you confirmed that the Board continues to actively monitor the achievement of all local efficiency programmes and, whilst the position is challenging, NHS Forth Valley remains fully committed to meeting its financial responsibilities in 2016/17 and beyond.

Conclusion

28. I would like to thank you and your team for hosting the Review and for responding so positively to the issues raised. It is clear NHS Forth Valley is making significant progress in taking forward a challenging agenda on a number of fronts.

NHS FORTH VALLEY ANNUAL REVIEW 2015/16

MAIN ACTION POINTS

The Board must:

- Continue to review, update and maintain robust arrangements for controlling Healthcare Associated Infection, with particular emphasis on *SABs*.
- Keep the Health and Social Care Directorates informed on progress towards achieving all access targets and standards, in particular for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Psychological Therapies.
- Continue to make progress against the staff sickness absence standard.
- Continue to achieve financial in-year and recurring financial balance, and keep the Health and Social Care Directorates informed of progress in implementing the local efficiency savings programme.

However, our discussions have assured me that you are not complacent and you recognise that there remains much to do. I include a list of the main action points from the Review in the attached Annex A.

best wishes

Aileen

AILEEN CAMPBELL