

The Great Western Hospital
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CQC report following a recent inspection at the Great Western Hospital

The Care Quality Commission visited the Great Western Hospital at the end of October and the findings from their five day inspection are due to be published tomorrow (Wednesday 18 December). The inspection team visited Jupiter, Mercury, Neptune, Saturn, Woodpecker and Ampney Wards, as well as Linnet Acute Medical Unit (LAMU), Day Surgery Unit (DSU) and the operating theatre suite. They also met senior staff to review processes for assessing and monitoring governance arrangements.

Although the inspection focused on the care of elderly people, the team also looked at standards of cleanliness and staffing levels. The inspectors spoke to patients and visitors about their experiences and to staff about what it feels like to work here. They also checked that the right systems and processes are in place and looked for evidence that we are meeting national standards of quality and safety.

Ahead of publication I wanted to keep you informed about what areas the report covers and what we are doing in response. I am pleased to say that we met the following standards:

- Respecting and involving people who use services
- Care and welfare of people who use services
- Records.

The CQC recognised that we treat patients with privacy, consideration and respect. They also praised staff interaction with patients, noticing how staff took the time to do simple things which make a big difference, such as talking in low voices and using curtains for privacy. It was noticed that staff are patient and understanding with patients and that patients, families and carers are involved in discussions about care and treatment.

The inspectors also saw that patients experienced care, treatment and support that met their needs and that personal records, including medical records, are accurate and kept safe and confidential.

These inspections also highlight areas which we need to work on and this inspection has shown that we need to make improvements to staffing levels and standards of cleanliness, which is exactly what we are doing.

Staffing

The inspection highlighted, what we already know, which is that we need more qualified, skilled and experienced nursing staff on our wards. We need more nurses to give patients the attention and personal care we strive for, which is why we began a big recruitment drive in April and have invested over £1 million in staffing this year. We have already recruited 267 nursing and midwifery staff since April and we have 87 more qualified nurses caring for patients than we did last year. Although the CQC recognised we've made good progress, we know we still have more work to do and are looking to recruit a further 40 nurses.

We are putting a significant amount of time and resource into getting more staff onto our wards and into the community, however recruiting nurses is not an easy or quick task. As you will know, there is a national shortage of qualified and experienced nurses, so recruitment is a real challenge for the whole NHS. We are doing all we can to recruit, both locally and internationally, even going as far afield as Spain, Portugal and Ireland to attract qualified and experienced nurses with the qualities we value – kindness, compassion and professionalism.

Cleanliness and infection control

This is the second area where improvement is needed. We monitor wards regularly, but sometimes a different perspective is needed and the CQC picked up things which we didn't, which is why we are now reviewing our monitoring arrangements. As an absolute priority we are working with Carillion, our cleaning provider, and our senior nurses, to strengthen the cleaning regime and review how we monitor cleanliness. As part of our action plan we are looking at creating an in-house housekeeping team to help nurses with the cleaning of clinical equipment. We are also looking at how housekeeping staff and nursing teams can work more closely, taking joint ownership for cleanliness standards.

Assessing and monitoring the quality of service provision

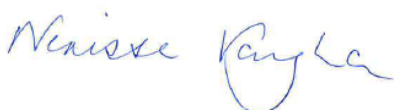
The CQC said that we needed to make some minor improvements to the systems we use to assess and monitor the safety and quality of patient care. For example, our monitoring system had not picked up that cleanliness standards needed to be improved, which is why we have now started to review how we monitor cleanliness.

Next steps

We are currently developing an action plan to address the areas highlighted by the CQC and I will ensure that you are kept up to date with progress. A full copy of the report will be available on the CQC website tomorrow (Wednesday 18 December) www.cqc.org.uk/

Should you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Nerissa Vaughan
Chief Executive