



By e-mail

Our reference: RAJ and RQ8

Clare Panniker  
Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Southend Hospital  
Prittle Chase  
Westcliff-on-Sea  
Essex  
SS0 0RY

Date: 12 December 2019

CQC Reference Number: INS2-5806114990 and INS2-7187080591

Dear Clare Panniker,

Re: CQC well led inspection of Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust.

Following your feedback meeting with Fiona Allinson (Head of Hospital Inspections) Martine Pringle (CQC Inspection Manager), Luam Kidane (CQC Inspector), on 12 December 2019. I thought it would be helpful to give you written feedback as highlighted at the inspection and given to you and your colleagues, Chief Nurse Diane Saker, Chair Alan Tobias and Managing Director Yvonne Blucher at the feedback meeting.

This letter does not replace the draft report and evidence appendix we will send to you, but simply confirms what we fed-back on 12 December 2019 and provides you with a basis to start considering what action is needed.

We would encourage you to discuss the findings of our inspection at the public session of your next board meeting. If your next board meeting takes place prior to receiving a final or draft inspection report and evidence appendix, this correspondence should be used to inform discussions with the board. When scheduling a discussion of this letter, or the draft report, please inform your CQC Regional Communications Manager, who is copied in to this letter.

### **An overview of our feedback from the Well Led inspection**

The preliminary findings that we fed back to you were:

Care Quality Commission  
Citygate  
Gallowgate  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE1 4PA

Telephone: 03000 616161  
Fax: 03000 616171

[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

- We thanked yourself and the team for the warm welcome we received and the smooth running of the inspection. Your staff in all cores services we inspected were friendly and welcoming throughout the inspection.

#### Leadership:

- The overall group had good skills, experience and awareness of the issues facing the two hospitals inspected.
- Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust (MEHT) the site leadership team were genuine, very enthusiastic with a commitment to drive services forward.
- Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (SUHFT) site leadership team were a very visible stable team, that wanted to improve services although did not appear as dynamic.

#### Vision & Strategy:

- The overall group had a defined vision and strategy to lead the two sites to the merger. Both site leadership teams were committed to deliver the overarching vision and strategy. All leaders knew their role to achieve the vision and were fully aware of how to deliver the overarching strategy.

#### Culture:

- The culture was different at each site, however all staff we spoke with felt supported and developed by the executive team. There were good examples of Black Minority Ethnic work at SUHFT.

#### Governance:

- Every member of the team we spoke with were aware of the governance structure and processes. There was a plan to strive for consistency at the two sites we inspected. Although there were some differences in the site governance structures, it was evident that the board in common was receiving the same relevant information and sharing learning to the sites.
- We raised our concerns regarding the potential challenges that might occur from reducing the number of non-executive directors from 18 to eight.

#### Management of risks, issues and performance:

- All staff articulated the same risks the top being the workforce. Systems and processes were embedded, the issue of 'off reporting referral to treatment (RTT) numbers at MEHT was explained and presented to the inspection team, to enable an understanding to the background, current position and future plans of getting back to externally reporting.

#### Learning and continuous improvement:

- Quality improvement knowledge could be stronger amongst site leaders. There were some references to Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles, but nobody truly articulated an example of where quality improvement had been used.

#### Engagement:

- All leaders gave examples of how staff at each site had been prepared and engaged with the merger of the hospitals.

- We heard of lots of staff training opportunities and external programmes.
- The complaints template at MEHT was very good.
- The process and appointments of the overseas nurses was very well planned and executed, and the pastoral support given to the nurses was exemplar.

There was a discussion and explanation regarding the ratings of services. We explained the aggregation principles and that inspectors were currently writing the core service reports which would then be processed through our quality assurance processes.

A draft inspection report will be sent to you once we have completed our due processes and you will have the opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the report. I am also copying this letter to at NHS Improvement

Could I take this opportunity to thank you once again for the arrangements that you made to help organise the inspection, and for the cooperation that we experienced from you and your staff.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact me through our National Customer Service Centre using the details below:

Telephone: 03000 616161

Write to: CQC  
Citygate  
Gallowgate  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 4PA

If you do get in touch, please make sure you quote or have the reference number (above) to hand. It may cause delay if you are not able to give it to us.

Yours sincerely



**Inspection Manager**

**c.c.** Copied to:

Fiona Allinson – CQC Head of Hospitals Inspection  
NHS England and NHS Improvement East of England  
Chris Craven CQC Inspector/Relationship owner of SUHFT  
Luam Kidane CQC Inspector/Relationship owner of MESHT