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1. **Introduction**

This report provides a progress update on the work-streams currently being driven forward under the umbrella of Patient Services and Patient and Public Involvement.

2. **Workstreams**

2.1 **Patient Involvement & Experience Strategy**

The *Patient Involvement & Experience Strategy ~ Ensuring a Voice: Offering Choice 2007-2010* was officially launched at the Trust’s fourth annual ‘Celebrating Our Success’ Conference on 18th May 2007.

A progress report on the actions implemented since the launch of the Strategy is currently being finalised and will be presented at the November 2007 Trust Board meeting.

The Head of Patient Services is currently working in partnership with the Patients’ Panel on seeking their views as to how the ‘Code of Conduct’ which describes the Trust’s expectations of staff in dealing with patients and the public, can be implemented effectively within the organisation. The finalised ‘Code of Conduct’ will be reproduced as A3 posters and strategically placed around the Trust and next to Comment Boxes.

2.2 **National & Local Patient Satisfaction Survey’s**

**National:**

An action plan has been developed to address quality issues identified by the National Inpatient Survey 2006/07 which was carried out by the Trust’s approved Contractor, Quality Health.

Quality Health also carried out the recent National Maternity Survey for 2006/07. Early feedback indicates that the Trust’s results are comparable to National results. It is planned that the final report will be presented to the Executive Team once received. Thereafter, the Chief Nurse will provide recommendations via the Patient Involvement & Experience Group on how these are taken forward to ensure that identified improvements take place.

The Trust is currently going out to tender with approved Contractors put forward by the Department of Health to support the Trust in participating in a re-visit of the National Inpatient Survey for 2007/08.
Local:

The Head of Patient Services is working with a Dr Foster Representative to look into the purchase of four hand-held PET tracker machines.

The machines will enable the Trust to undertake weekly patient satisfaction surveys. Five questions, identified from the outcome of the National Inpatient Survey and complaints data analysis will be entered onto the machine and patients will be asked to record on it their own responses. The themes derived from these machines will provide the Trust with indicators of quality issues, providing the Trust with an earlier opportunity to implement mitigating action to ensure continual quality improvement.

2.3 Patients’ Panel & Patient and Public Involvement Forum (PPI)

The Patients’ Panel continue to be involved in a number of Trust Committee/Group meetings in an effort to support improvements in response to ‘Delivering a Healthy Future’.

The PPI Forum and Patients’ Panel members also provide continued support by their involvement in iPEAT inspections, six monthly Essence of Care: Observation of Care audits and regular hand washing compliance audits.

The PPI Forum and Panel members meet with the Trust’s Chief Executive Officer on a six weekly basis in order to receive Trust news updates. In turn, this provides an opportunity for the Chief Executive Officer to listen to patients, carers and the public’s views on Trust services. In addition, the Head of Patient Services meets with the Patients’ Panel on a monthly basis to discuss how they can continue to support the Trust.

The Trust continues to activity drive forward the initiatives agreed at the recently formed Dignity in Care Group. In addition to Trust staff, the Chief Nurse, Chair of the Patients’ Panel and the Head of Patient Services have signed up to become Dignity Champions.

2.4 Main Reception

The Head of Patient Services is currently developing a proposal for the restoration of full Receptionist cover on all Trust sites, thereby providing a service for patients, carers and members of the public from 8:00am to 8:00pm Monday to Friday, with additional cover at weekends.

‘Meeters and Greeters’ continue to be recruited and trained through the PALS Department to provide additional support and direction for patients and carers.

2.5 Voluntary Services

The Voluntary Services Manager and the Modern Matron for Acute Medical Care are compiling hygiene packs for all Wards to ensure that all patients admitted in an emergency have the necessary toiletries, combs, brushes etc. A case has been made to the League of Friends in a bid to secure regular funding for these packs.

A Volunteers Policy that ensures consistency in the management of Volunteers across the Trust has been ratified and circulated. A Volunteers ‘Recruitment and Retention’ Strategy is currently being drawn up in a bid to improve Volunteer job satisfaction and reduce the high turnover of Volunteers.

A Trust wide electronic database of all Volunteers has now been created and active recruitment to an already established pool of Volunteers is taking place. In addition, much work has been carried out this year to support Work Experience Students and Cadets.
2.6 Patient Advisory & Liaison Service (PALS)

Subject to the recruitment of an additional PALS Officer, it is planned that the Patient Advisory & Liaison Service be restored on the Hemel Hempstead Hospital site.

A Volunteer working in the PALS Department now provides support in emptying Comment Boxes across the Trust, thus providing the means to ensure provision of feedback directly to clinical areas.

In addition, a quarterly Comment Card report identifying salient issues and themes is provided for the Trust’s Complaints Advisory Committee.

PALS continue to support the delivery of information, care and treatment to patients within our diverse Communities via the Trust’s contracted Interpreting & Translation Services. An Interpreting & Translation Policy has recently been produced which details the functions of this service and how it can be accessed.

2.7 Spiritual & Pastoral Care

The Spiritual & Pastoral Care Department continue to raise awareness of spiritual healthcare needs, educating staff, supporting Volunteers and developing links with local Faith Leaders.

The Department has supported Theological Students on placement, trained Eucharistic Ministers, and during April - June 2007 ran a new Chaplaincy Visitor Training Programme.

The Chaplains have met with representatives from Camp Simcha (a charity working specifically to help Jewish children in the UK, with life threatening illnesses, including cancer) with a view to their providing a Jewish Paediatric Chaplain for the Hospitals in the London area. West Hertfordshire is the first NHS Trust to have discussions around this issue. Conversations have also taken place with representatives from a number of other faith groups in order to ensure that the religious and spiritual needs of all our patients are recognised and met.

Following a request for further support in the event of an emergency baptism, the Spiritual & Pastoral Care Department has sourced and placed Spiritual & Religious Care Resources Boxes, including Emergency Baptism Packs in all paediatric areas.

2.8 Bereavement Care

The Bereavement Steering Group, chaired by the Head of Patient Services continues to develop Trust-wide policies and procedures to meet the needs of patients, relatives and carers and to ensure compliance with the Human Tissue Authority. With the support of the Coroner of Hertfordshire, a work-plan is being drawn up of all bereavement work achieved and proposed. A further Trust Bereavement Workshop is planned for October 2007.

The Head of Patient Services, Consultant Histopathologist and the Histopathology Laboratory Manager, are planning to recruit and train a bank of staff equipped to work closely with families and carers of the recently deceased to ensure they are supported throughout the Hospital post mortem process and to also re-instate a Trust-wide Cadaveric Organ Donation service.

The Patient Affairs Department continues to provide an excellent bereavement service for the Trust in respect of both adults and babies. They work very closely with Maternity Unit to ensure that all parents are supported and all staff are updated and trained in respect of the ‘Loss of a Baby’.
2.9 Working with Our Local Community

Both the Asian & African Caribbean Communities were supported during ‘Carers Week’ by the Patient Services Departments who set up stalls to promote their services. Joint working with these communities has resulted in many Trust Consultants and Doctors attending their weekly luncheon clubs where they advise on specific medical conditions and general health promotion.

Regular attendance at the ‘Communities Together’ and at the ‘SAMRIAF’ (St Albans Multi-Racial Inter-Agency Forum) has facilitated close working with other external organisations and communities in all Trust related business and updates on ‘Delivering a Healthy Future’.

The Project Manager for Watford Health Campus and the Head of Patient Services have worked again this year on a series of Workshops at Tring School on their 3 ‘E’s project (Energy, Esteem and Enquiry). This provided an ideal opportunity to work with year seven students to encourage them to consider/advise on a future career in the NHS.

3. Conclusion

This report provides assurance to the Trust Board that there is a wealth of activity being progressed that ensures developments and improvements are being provided in the provision of patient services and partnership working under the remit of the patient and public involvement agenda.

Gary Etheridge
Chief Nurse, Director of Patient Services

October 2007