
Public Board Meeting, 18 December 2008

Standards for Better Health

This paper provides a briefing on the current levels of compliance for all standards.

Presented by: Graham Ramsay, Medical Director/Director of Patient Safety

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper provides a briefing to the Board on the current levels of compliance against all 24 core standards within Standards For Better Health in advance of the final declaration that has to be submitted to the Care Quality Commission (the successor body to the Healthcare Commission) by 1 May 2009.
- 1.2 The policy is intended to help staff understand their responsibility and to ensure that a register of acceptances and refusals is maintained.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Trust is required to make an annual declaration of its compliance against the 24 core standards set out under Standards for Better Health. This declaration has, in the past, been submitted to the Healthcare Commission and has formed an integral part of the annual health check assessment in respect of quality of services that the Commission has been responsible for assessing.
- 2.2 From April 2009 the Healthcare Commission will be replaced by the Care Quality Commission. Requirements for reporting on Standards For Better Health will remain as they are until the CQC has taken a view on any changes that may be required. It is expected that the declaration will, as in previous years, be a key document in terms of the annual health check rating for the quality of services provided by the Trust.
- 2.3 During the first half of the year the Board received domain reports on the progress being made to ensure compliance with standards within each of the domains. Where issues were identified in those reports actions have been taken to ensure that either full year compliance can be demonstrated or in year/end of year compliance will be achieved.
- 2.4 For the 2007/08 year the Trust declared compliance against all standards except four. These were C4c (decontamination), C20a (health and safety), C20b (privacy and dignity relating to single sex accommodation) and C23 (public health). Following a review of the declaration it was noted that the date for achieving compliance against these standards was incorrectly recorded and, with the agreement of the Healthcare Commission, these were changed. With the exception of C4c the Trust's revised compliance dates were either within the current financial year (C20b and C23) or by year end (C20a)

- 2.5 Following the submission of the declaration the HCC inspected the Trust against 5 of the core standards in order to determine whether, in their view, the Trust was right to declare compliance. The core standards inspected were C4b (medical devices), C8a (raising concerns with regard to patient care and delivery of services), C10a (employment checks), C11c (participation in further professional and occupational development). In the opinion of the HCC the Trust was not compliant with C10a and qualified the Trust against this standard. All others were considered to be compliant. The Trust is currently challenging the HCC's assessment of standard C10a as it believes that it is compliant. Attached at appendix A is the letter sent to the HCC outlining our position in respect of this standard.
- 2.6 Following the appointment of the new Assistant Director of Clinical Governance and Risk, a detailed assessment has been undertaken on the evidence base against each core standard.
- 2.7 As a result of serious concerns over the timeliness of responding to complaints and a formal investigation which identified systemic delays in respect of a number of complaints, standard C14c has been identified as not currently compliant as this focuses on the timeliness of complaint responses. Action has been taken and an end of year compliance will be achieved.
- 2.8 Given the Trust's view in relation to the evidence associated with C10a, and subject to the outcome of the dialogue with the HCC, the Trust plans to declare compliance against this standard.
- 2.9 Attached at appendix B is a summary of the current forecast of compliance. The Trust is showing that it anticipates:
- 1 – Standard will be categorised as not met for the whole of the year and will not be corrected by March 31st 2008 (standard C4c)
To obtain 'almost met' the Trust cannot have more than 4 in this category. Based on current performance the Trust is predicting 1 standard being declared as not met.
 - 4 –additional standards will be categorised as not met which are either currently corrected or will be corrected by March 31st 2008 (standards C14c, C20a, C20b, C23)
 - To obtain 'almost met' the Trust cannot have more than 8 standards, in total, categorised as not met or insufficient assurance. Based on this report the Trust has 5
- 2.10 In preparation for the submission on the declaration next year the Trust has now begun the process of working with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the County Council and LINKs both of whom will have an opportunity to make a formal comment on our declaration which will be included in the final submission.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Given the validation work that has been done and the resulting assessment of each of the core standards the Board is asked to:
- Note the progress that has been made in ensuring that the Trust can submit a year end declaration that will indicate and "almost met" assessment

- Agree to receive the final draft declaration for approval in principal at the March Board meeting, approval Chairman's action for final sign off in April subject to receipt of comments from the stakeholder organisations that are expected to provide commentary on the Trust's overall position in respect of Standards for Better Health.

Graham Ramsay

Medical Director/Director of Patient Safety

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