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**Public Board Meeting 28 November 2009**

**Reputation Audit**

**Presented by: David McNeil, Director of Corporate Affairs**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Board on a reputation audit that was carried out during the months of August and September 2009.
- 1.2. This audit will assess how the Trust is viewed locally and, where necessary help plan strategic measures to build on its public reputation.

**2. Scope**

- 2.1 A total of 139 people were surveyed from across all areas of west Hertfordshire. The sample was broadly representative of the population with a cross section of age range and ethnic groups.
- 2.1. Responses to the survey were collected both face-to-face and via a pop-up from the homepage of the Trust website. All completed surveys were anonymous.

**3. Overall Results**

- 3.1. The overall survey results show that local people rate the Trust positively, mainly based upon their own and their family and friend's experience. 89% rated the services overall at West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust as 'Fair' to 'Very Good' and they are generally confident about the quality of services they receive.
- 3.2. 84% of people who responded to the survey said that they had attended at least one of the hospitals in the Trust in the past and 24% of people had also attended other hospitals outside of west Hertfordshire.
- 3.3. Over half the people surveyed had attended as an outpatient (57%) with 22% as an inpatient and 19% as a visitor.
- 3.4. When asked, in their opinion, how the Trust could make general service improvements, a number of people felt that they would like a better standard of customer care with more face-to-face communication, particularly if an outpatient clinic is running late or regarding their discharge. They also felt that there was a lack of communication between staff and other departments that resulted in delays, i.e. outpatient appointments not running to time, hospital notes not being available.
- 3.5. A total of 96% found the staff in the Outpatient Department to be friendly and helpful and 80% of people surveyed felt that the outpatient booking-in process and the information they received prior to the appointment was 'Very Good' or 'Good'. However 34% of people felt that outpatient booking-out process could be improved.

## **4. Site specific results**

### **4.1 Watford General Hospital**

**4.2** 68% of people surveyed rated the service they received at Watford either 'Excellent' or 'Good' with 32% rating it 'Fair', 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

**4.3** 66% were happy with the way they had been communicated with in relation to their appointment, discharge and/or admission, but 34% felt the communication could have been improved.

**4.4** 59% of people surveyed felt that the Watford site was accessible, but 41% found it difficult to access.

### **5. Hemel Hempstead Hospital**

**5.1** Three quarters of people surveyed rated the service they received at Hemel Hempstead as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

**5.2** 67% were happy with the way they had been communicated with in relation to their appointment, discharge and/or admission, but 33% felt the communication could have been improved.

**5.3** 84% of people surveyed felt that the Hemel site was accessible, but 16% found it difficult to access.

### **6. St Albans City Hospital**

**6.1** 82% of people surveyed rated the service they received at St Albans either 'Excellent' or 'Good' with 18% rating it 'Fair', 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

**6.2** 81% were happy with the way they had been communicated with in relation to their appointment, discharge and/or admission, but 19% felt the communication could have been improved.

**6.3** 87% of people surveyed felt that the Hemel site was accessible, but 13% found it difficult to access.

## **7. Communication**

**7.1** When asked what they based their opinion of the Trust on, 72% of people said it was their own personal experience and 26% on their families, friends and neighbours experience.

**7.2** Only 1% of those surveyed said that they rated their opinion on the coverage in the local media.

**7.3** Nearly three quarters of the people surveyed did not know that the Trust was applying to become a Foundation Trust.

## **8. Next steps**

**8.1** A rigorous reputation management and staff motivation programme has been put into practice. Elements of this programme include:

### External

- Talks and presentations to local community groups and societies
- Using patients feedback from NHS Choice, 48 hr post-discharge phone calls and complaints to improve services
- Building relationships with the local media, including distributing regular positive stories
- Responding robustly to negative media stories whenever possible and appropriate
- Publishing positive information in local parish and community magazines
- Introducing a page of positive patient and stakeholder comments to the Trust website

### Internal

- Improving lines of communication with staff on wards by faxing important information
- Featuring positive patient stories and site-specific information in Trust internal publications/newsletters
- Displaying positive news and letters from patients in high-footfall areas of the sites
- Introducing an 'Open Door' meeting programme for staff on each site to air any issues and find solutions to problems.
- Regular visits by the Trust Board to wards and departments

**8.2** A further audit will be undertaken during April 2010 using the original format. This will assess the impact and effectiveness of the programme on the reputation of the Trust, both externally and internally.

## **9. Recommendations**

**9.1** The Board is asked to note the content of this report.

**David McNeil**

Director of Communications & Corporate Affairs  
January 2010