

Mahdi Hassan
Chair
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Jac Kelly
Interim Chief Executive Officer
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

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16th September 2015

Dear Jac and Mahdi

In light of the serious concerns identified by the Chief Inspector of Hospitals inspection of West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust in April and May 2015, the NHS Trust Development Authority (TDA) agreed to uphold the CQC's formal report recommendation (published 4 September 2015) to place the Trust in Special Measures. This decision was taken at a meeting of the TDA Executive Team on 8 September 2015.

The TDA is concerned by the scale and breadth of the failings identified by the inspection team. The Trust has been rated 'inadequate' in two of the five domains (well-led and safe) and 'requires improvement' in the three remaining domains (responsive, caring and effectiveness). These combined domain ratings drive an overall Trust rating of 'inadequate'.

The Special Measures Programme consists of a range of interventions designed to support the Trust in achieving rapid improvement in the areas of concern identified by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) report and to ensure that patients are receiving the high quality, safe care, they deserve from a responsive, well-led organisation. These support measures were discussed at the Quality Summit and will be made available to the Trust immediately to drive the necessary quality improvement at pace:

- Board to Board meeting to gain further understanding of the challenges faced by the Trust and to identify any further support that would be beneficial. A meeting has been scheduled for 15 October 2015;
- Appointment of an Improvement Director (ID) to act on behalf of the NHS TDA and work closely with your Board to support delivery of the improvement objectives. Jane Lewington has been appointed and will start in her role at the end of September. An introductory meeting with Jane will be arranged in due course;
- A buddy arrangement with another provider organisation to provide additional support and best practice experience where this is deemed to add value to the Quality Improvement Plan; and,
- A Board capacity and capability review will be undertaken to identify any opportunities for strengthening Board governance and leadership and to ensure appropriate support is in place.

A stakeholder Oversight Group has been established to support delivery of the agreed improvement plan and will be accountable for gaining assurance directly from the Trust Board on the improvements required. The first meeting of this group is scheduled for 17 September 2015. This will be in addition to the usual IDM arrangements that are in place for the organisation.

The regional TDA team will continue to provide advice, support and professional leadership to the Trust Board and this will be supplemented by involvement of national Executive Directors as required.

It is vital that the improvements required are implemented at pace, and the guidance and leadership you provide to your respective executive and non-executive colleagues will be critical in ensuring that this pace is sufficient and can be maintained.

An information pack is included with this letter that provides further detail on the Special Measures Programme. If you wish to discuss the above or any related issues in more detail, please contact Mark Cubbon, your Portfolio Director, in the first instance.

Yours sincerely



Dale Bywater

Director of Delivery & Development

Encl: Special Measures – Information Pack for Trusts

cc: Mark Cubbon, Portfolio Director, TDA
Kathy McLean, Medical Director, TDA
Peter Blythin, Director of Nursing, TDA
Maggie Boyd, Clinical Quality Director, TDA