

## Healthwatch replies to NHS Trust Quality Accounts 2020/21

### Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset replied to the Quality Accounts produced by NHS Trusts during 2020/21

We work with volunteers who assist us in replying to the [Quality Accounts produced each year by NHS Trusts](#).

We replied to the Quality Accounts of:

- [Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership](#)
- [Royal United Hospital](#)
- [South West Ambulance Service](#)
- [Virgin Care](#)

We aim to follow up with each Trust following the publication of their Quality Account, to enquire how the Trust is progressing with the priorities that they have set out in their Quality Account for the coming year.

We would normally reply to the Trusts Quality Accounts during April /May, but this year (2020/21) because of COVID 19, the NHS gave each Trust extra time to produce their Quality Account.

#### **South West Ambulance Service**

We replied to the South West Ambulance Service Quality Account and sent our reply to [Healthwatch Devon](#) who collated all the responses across the 13 counties the Trust covers to send onto the Trust.

We were glad to read that one of the 2020/21 priorities will be the development of accessible information. The Trust has not provided previous draft quality accounts in an audio format, which has meant that our Volunteer for Quality, who is registered blind, has been unable to contribute their feedback. We would like to highlight that the Quality Account mentions English as a second language and that interpreters can be provided, as well as providing British Sign Language interpreters, but there is no reference to providing information in an audio format. We would therefore ask The Trust to review this priority and ensure that all formats are covered to comply with the Accessible Information

We noted that Covid-19 impacted the Trust's ability to meet their priorities during 2019/20, especially the mortality review and the engagement regarding cardiac arrest, and we hope these priorities can be completed in the future.

We were disappointed to read that there has been an increase in [Serious Incidents](#) but welcome the reductions this year in moderate harm and Adverse Incidents.

We followed up with the Trust at a virtual meeting on 18 January 2021 and were able to ask about receiving the draft Quality Account in an audio format. We were told that the published

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Quality Account would be available in different formats, but they are unable to provide the draft Quality Account in an audio version. This is disappointing as other Trusts have been able to accommodate and provide us with their draft Quality Account versions in audio enabling our volunteer to fully engage with our response.

### **Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership**

We worked in partnership with our colleagues in [Healthwatch Wiltshire](#) to send a joint reply to Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Trust (AWP) who had sent their draft Quality Account for comment earlier despite the NHS extension in time. Unfortunately, we were unable to follow up on their priorities for 2020/21 as the member of staff we usually liaise with has been seconded to assist with Covid vaccinations in the Trust. We are still awaiting the identification of a new contact at AWP.

### **Royal United Hospital (RUH)**

We worked with Healthwatch Wiltshire to send a joint reply to the Royal United Hospital (RUH) who had provided their draft Quality Account for response. We welcomed the list of abbreviations at the front of the document. As the Quality Account is a public document this is always a welcome addition.

We were pleased to see that in the most part, priorities from 2019/20 were met, and welcomed the priorities set for 2020/21. These included continuity of the carer model to personalise maternity services, developing a frailty assessment, critical care outreach and working with volunteers to improve the staff and patient experience.

Healthwatch staff and volunteers met with Lisa Cheek the Director of Nursing on 12 December 2020 to hear how the Trust has been progressing with their 2020/21 priorities. During the meeting we were able to ask about the Patient Experience Group. Lisa explained that the Trust is looking into revamping the group, perhaps using a Patient and Carer Parliament, although there are other proposals for the future. There are a variety of groups using patient involvement including, an end of life group, a patient safety group and a volunteer group where they are developing a volunteer strategy. As this is a priority area it will be a place where we can have input. Healthwatch Wiltshire asked Lisa about how the RUH is listening to patients and what information would be useful for them to know as Healthwatch Wiltshire hears from patients who use services at the RUH. Lisa also explained that they have adapted the Friends and Family test and have added three additional questions.

The Healthwatch volunteer attending asked about the incident escalation in the Quality Account and Lisa explained that this is about bed capacity to support patients coming in through A&E. Lisa explained about Operational Pressures Escalation Levels (OPEL) 1 through to OPEL 4. OPEL 4 is declared when the local health and social care system is experiencing so much pressure it cannot provide comprehensive care or guarantee patient care and safety, which often happens in winter. The flu surge usually happens January to March and, looking at the model in Australia where the UK monitors their winter flu statistics to forecast our own cases, there is an expected reduction of flu cases this year.

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In May 2020 there were 98 Covid cases which have since reduced to 58 patients in December 2020. Patients are tested on admission and then tested on day three and day five, and then weekly, to see if they have contracted the virus. We asked about the visiting restrictions and Lisa explained that families can keep in touch through PALS and are able to send in personal items, such as clean clothes this way. Families of patients at end of life or with learning disabilities can still have restrictive visits.

### Virgin Care

We replied to the draft Virgin Care Quality Account and were pleased to see the priorities for 2020/21 included ensuring colleagues and people who access services remain safe whilst COVID-19 is present or remains a risk factor, completing the relocation of referral management function of remaining services to the Care Co-ordination Centre, improving health inequalities, ensuring that continuous improvement relating to learning from Safeguarding Adults is embedded and a focus on personalised care.

Healthwatch staff and volunteers met with Lisa Cronan the Director of Nursing on 12 November 2020 and asked if there are any COVID 19 cases at the RUH and Lisa confirmed there were 25 cases at the time of asking. Lisa had a concern about the rise in [C Difficile](#) at the hospital, which she will follow up.

Lisa explained that at the moment the Community Care Centre is based at the Hub in Peasedown St John, it may need to be relocated when staff are no longer working at home, as the Hub may not be large enough. Virgin Care are still at the offices at St Martins, although they were only supposed to be there until 2019. The Healthwatch volunteer asked if District Nurses work from the hub and Lisa explained that they are based within two centres in Bath.

Our volunteer asked whether Virgin Care reception staff have had training, as they have heard of a GP receptionist calling Virgin Care via the Hub on behalf of the GP regarding an issue where a District Nurse had not attended a patient and was told abruptly that the Hub does not train Virgin Care reception staff. Lisa said she hopes this is a one off but will look into this.

We asked about oral health as we have had a lot of calls about patients including children not being able to register with an NHS dentist. Lisa explained the priority is in the early stages and thinks that a lot of patients will have dental issues after Covid. Lisa will ask for an update.

The Healthwatch volunteer asked about staff replying to the Friends and Family Test where only 48% agree that there is career progression at Virgin Care. Lisa agreed that often there is not a route for progression in posts and explained that there have been posts advertised for Community Matrons and staff have been able to move up. Next year Healthwatch would like to see compliments and complaints shown in the Quality Account, Lisa explained that they had been given a Quality Account template this year and this was not asked for. She has said that it could be added to the 2020/21 Quality Account that they are beginning to prepare now.