

Later this morning, (Thursday) the CQC will be publishing a statement about the report\* of its unannounced inspections in July of Colchester General Hospital.

The CQC carried out this focused inspection on 8 July in response to concerns in relation to staffing and standards of care received by patients on a number of surgical and medical wards. Seven ward areas were visited. They returned to Colchester General Hospital on 14 July to conduct an inspection at night.

*The unannounced visits precede the formal [three-day CQC inspection](#) of the Trust in September.*

The inspection and subsequent report identified a number of issues, including high levels of nursing agency staff, staffing levels that were not always sufficient to manage the acuity of patients, lack of consistency in relation to the induction of agency staff and inconsistent application of Trust policies, including documentation.

**Dr Lucy Moore, the Trust's Chief Executive, said:**

“We are aware of the on-going need for improvement. The examples of poor care identified are unacceptable to us and I apologise on behalf of the Trust to any patient or their family who has been affected. They do not reflect the standards which we expect to be given consistently to all of our patients. Immediate action was taken in the specific ward areas where issues were identified and we have taken the further opportunity to refocus our improvement plan and redouble our efforts to increase the pace of change.

“I am pleased that the CQC recognised that the Emergency Assessment Unit (EAU) is complying with the conditions imposed by them last December and that staffing levels have improved.

“We have a recruitment plan which will see a full establishment in our nursing teams by the end of March 2016.

**“I am confident of the huge effort from all staff to drive improvement, their strong desire and determination to change, and their awareness of the issues and challenges. However, there is more to do to tackle the inconsistency of care that we provide.”**

Other actions that have been taken include:

- A new ward induction programme for agency and locum staff
- A new senior structure on Brightlingsea and Mersea wards, to support and develop the ward sisters
- A further review of the “acuity” and dependency needs of patients and a resultant increase in the establishment of nursing staff on a number of key wards
- An updated medicines’ management policy to enable competent agency staff to prescribe medicines and ensure that they are administered in a timely way

- A continuing focus to support staff so that they are aware, understand and are able to adhere to Trust policies on resuscitation, mental capacity and deprivation of liberty safeguards
- We will continue to undertake audits and peer inspections covering use of the resuscitation, consent and moving and handling policies
- Recent audits completed in our Urgent Care division have shown 100% compliance for decisions not to resuscitate patients were appropriate.

Lucy added:

“We are on a journey of improvement and not yet at the destination, but I would like to reassure people that a great deal of work has been undertaken to improve quality and safety in the past 12 months at our hospitals.

“The Trust is still on the road to recovery and we all acknowledge that there is still a way to go. However we are addressing the concerns raised by the CQC and we have taken action since the CQC inspectors visited in July.

“We want our teams to provide the quality of care we all aspire to and which patients expect and deserve. We have very good staff and with their help we are confident that we can make the necessary improvements.”

The next formal CQC inspection of the Trust will take place on 15-18 September.

\* A full report of the inspection is available on the CQC website:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/provider/RDE>

ENDS

3 September 2015

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