

East Kent Hospitals Update for Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Care Quality Commission Inspections

Introduction

This report summarises feedback from two Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections of William Harvey Hospital in Ashford and Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital (QEQM) in Margate. Both inspections took place in March 2021.

1. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

- 1.1 The CQC undertook a focussed inspection in March 2021 to look at IPC practices at both hospitals. This followed enforcement action taken by the regulator in August 2020 following an inspection in August 2020.
- 1.2 The inspection team found the departments controlled infection risk well, with staff using equipment and control measures to protect patients, themselves and others from infection. Equipment and the premises were visibly clean.
- 1.3 Several areas of outstanding practice were identified by inspectors, including how staff were protecting clinically extremely vulnerable patients from infection, and changes to resuscitation areas in the emergency departments to help keep staff and patients safe.
- 1.4 Inspectors found that staff felt respected, supported and valued and were focused on the IPC needs of patients. The report praised the Trust's culture, where staff could raise concerns about IPC without fear and were supported to do so.
- 1.5 It recognised that the Trust has structures, processes and accountability to support IPC standards, with a comprehensive assurance system in place, enabling performance issues and risks to be monitored and addressed.
- 1.6 The report also recognised that staff were committed to continually learning and improving IPC performance.
- 1.7 Areas identified where improvements could be made included changing the layout of the doctors' mess to allow for social distancing, adding more staff changing rooms to wards, and increasing the IPC leadership team to ensure they have the resources to support all staff. There were no "must do" actions.
- 1.8 These areas are being addressed by the Trust's Integrated IPC Working Group, a multi-disciplinary group that meets weekly to ensure progress against any outstanding actions.
- 1.9 Dr Neil Wigglesworth, Director of IPC joined the Trust in March to lead the Trust's recently expanded IPC team. Further appointments are underway, including a Deputy Director of IPC starting in June and additional Lead Nurse roles to strengthen site-based IPC leadership.
- 1.10 As a result of the inspection, the conditions previously imposed by the CQC were lifted in March. The CQC's report is [available here](#).

2. Inspection of Emergency Departments at QEQM and William Harvey Hospitals

- 2.1 Inspectors undertook a second focussed inspection in March to assess whether the urgent and emergency care services were experiencing pressure due to winter demands or as a result of COVID-19.
- 2.2 The CQC report, published earlier this month, showed improvements to the performance of both emergency departments.
- 2.3 The inspection team found the departments controlled infection risk well, with staff using equipment and control measures to protect patients, themselves and others from infection. Equipment and the premises were visibly clean.
- 2.4 Inspectors reported that staff were focused on the needs of patients receiving care and the departments had an open culture where patients, their families and staff could raise concerns without fear.
- 2.5 We are taking action on the areas for further improvement and have completed renovations of the mental health room at William Harvey Hospital.”
- 2.6 Areas identified by the CQC for improvement included waiting times, consultant cover at QEQM Hospital, and suitable facilities in place to care for patients with mental health problems and processes for monitoring the health of waiting patients at William Harvey Hospital.
- 2.7 Reducing waiting times for patients in the emergency departments and improving bed availability is a key focus of the Trust’s quality improvement programme, *We Care*. Frailty Assessment Units and Same Day Emergency Care units, specialist areas aimed at treating patients quickly so that they do not need to be admitted, have recently been established at both hospitals.
- 2.8 Coupled with work to increase the number of patients discharged at the weekend and earlier in the day, the Trust has already seen an improvement in bed availability, a significant reduction in medical patients outlying on surgical wards and a reduced waiting times for emergency patients with serious illness and injury (majors).
- 2.9 As a result of the inspection, William Harvey Hospital’s rating for safety has improved from inadequate to requires improvement. QEQM Hospital’s rating remains at requires improvement.
- 2.10 The CQC produced an inspection report for each [William Harvey Hospital](#) and [QEQM Hospital](#).

Ends.