

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE

QUALITY ACCOUNTS PANEL

31 MAY 2012

The Panel established by the Council's Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee, the Council's committee with the statutory responsibility for scrutiny of local health services, received and commented upon the Quality Accounts from the following organisations:

1. Brook East of England
2. Milton Keynes Community Health Service
3. Milton Keynes Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
4. South Central Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust

1. Brook East of England

This was the first time Brook East of England had submitted their Quality Accounts for scrutiny and the Panel received it with interest. However, they felt that the Account was rather bland and expressed concern at the lack of specific content:

- (i) the precise nature of the services provided by Brook East of England were not particularly clear;
- (ii) although the Account provided an outline of which areas of service the agency hoped to improve in the coming year there did not appear to be an indication of how this would be achieved;
- (iii) there was no explanation of why, after 45 years service, these changes were being made now;
- (iv) the Account did not appear to set out what the agency had done to deliver quality care and therefore the Panel had no sense of how to judge the quality of service provision;
- (v) there was a lack of any specific projects to improve service quality;
- (vi) the panel would have appreciated more specific information relating to the agency's activities in the Milton Keynes area;
- (vii) the panel felt that more detail was required on the previous position of the agency, where it was now and where it hoped to be going in the future would have been helpful, particularly to the non-specialist reader;
- (viii) proper executive summaries of key issues would also have been helpful.

The Panel felt that Brook East of England were underselling themselves and that the Account did not do justice to the valuable service it believes that the agency provides for local young people. However, this was the first time that Brook East of England had submitted a Quality Account and the Panel acknowledged that a good Quality Account can be a difficult document to prepare.

The Panel hoped that Brook East of England would be able to take the above comments on board in the preparation of next year's Quality Account which they would be interested to receive in due course.

2. Milton Keynes Community Health Services

The Panel welcomed the Quality Account from the Milton Keynes Community Health Service, which it considered to be a good, comprehensive report that was laid out well, was readable and could be readily accessed by the public. However, the Panel did feel that the Account was a little too long and that perhaps some sections could have been summarised more succinctly.

The Account gave a fair and frank assessment of performance during 2011-2012,, highlighted the importance of integrating services effectively and presented a good strategic context for the work of the Community Health Service in Milton Keynes. It gave a clear indication of the Community Health Service's priorities for improvement during 2012-13 and set out how it planned to achieve this.

The Panel appreciated the 'equality thread' which it perceived running through the whole account and commended the fact that this approach meant that no group of service users had been marginalised.

The Panel thought the section on the Patient Experience was excellent; it was an informative and interesting read which would be easily comprehended by the general reader.

The Panel also noted and welcomed the increased engagement between the Community Health Service and the Milton Keynes branch of the Local Involvement Network (LiNK). It also commended the way in which the Community Health Service had collected and collated data across all services.

The Panel felt that this year's Quality Account from the Milton Keynes Community Health Service was well thought out, well presented, interesting and accessible to the general reader. It was an excellent example of good practice in the preparation of this type of document and should be commended as such to other organisations that have to prepare Quality Accounts.

3. Milton Keynes Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

The Panel noted that although the Quality Account from Milton Keynes Hospital was more readable than the previous year's, there were still some areas of presentation which needed to be addressed: contents did not flow particularly well and in places were difficult to follow; the Panel felt that there was no narrative to the Account;

- (i) the financial figures did not link to the content of the Account; finance detail was not required if it was not referred to elsewhere in the document;
- (ii) there was no internal benchmarking for comparison purposes; it was difficult to draw comparisons which the Panel found frustrating;
- (iii) the Account was not structured to show what improvements had been achieved over the past year;
- (iv) The panel accepted that the Hospital had delivered on its previous recommended improvements to the Maternity Unit but commented that it would have been beneficial, due to the sustained public interest in the service, to continue to emphasise that the unit is continued to be monitored.
- (v) the account lacked a cohesive, editorial style; the Panel felt that it had been written by healthcare professionals for healthcare professionals and lacked the accessibility required in a document which would be read by the general public;
- (vi) patients did not appear to be part of the story; there was a lack of detail in relation to measuring patient numbers and the Panel was concerned about how realistic the patient surveys actually were;
- (vii) the Panel felt that there was insufficient analysis of the targets in relation to End of Life Care.

Overall the Panel was disappointed with the Hospital's Quality Account due to its lack of cohesion and clarity and that due to the large amount of technical terminology used it would be very inaccessible to the lay reader.

The Panel commented that there had been a lot of good news stories associated with the hospital over the past year and greater emphasis could have been placed on these success stories. The Panel felt that it was underselling itself and that the Quality Account did not do justice to some of the excellent work which is being done by the Hospital.

Lastly the Panel believed that the presentation of the document could be improved to make it more accessible for members of the public.

Generally the Panel believed that, to help the public to understand and use Quality Accounts, it would be helpful if there was a standard template / format used by all health providers.

4. South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust

The South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust had submitted a summary of their Quality Account. The panel felt that this did not provide sufficient information on which to base any meaningful comments. The Panel requested that the South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust be asked to submit their full document for further consideration by the Panel before any comment could be made and a report prepared.