

14 August 2017

**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

Area Coroner for the Liverpool and Wirral Area  
Anita Bhardwaj  
Gerard Majella Courthouse  
Boundary Street  
Liverpool  
L5 2QD

Dear Madam

Re: **Lee Joseph Hastings Swain – Inquest**

I write further to the Inquest into the death of Mr Hastings Swain which concluded on 16 June 2017.

At that Inquest you expressed the following concerns:

A more co-ordinated approach from the mental health services is required when a user is being transferred from one NHS Trust to another. In this case if the user had still been on a Care Programme Approach there would have been a direct referral from service to service rather than through the GP but because he was taken off the programme the referral was made through the GP. This has delayed the intervention and the prevented effective information exchange on a user who was already subject to secondary care services. In effect this resulted in the user having no intervention for a number of months and entering the mental health system afresh when in fact the care should have been a seamless continuation.

The Court would like you to review the Current Transfer / Referral Policy.

The Trust is grateful to you for the opportunity to update you as to the progress made to implement these measures since the conclusion of the Inquest and I now write to provide that update.

Trust responses

The two Trusts involved namely Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP) and Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust (MCFT) met to discuss the responses to your concerns and agreed that both organisations would review their policies separately but ensure that the guiding principle of making it clear to staff the processes that should be adopted when transferring patients from one organisation to another was undertaken as part of this review. It was felt to be important to

undertake separate reviews of Trust policies as they have to be representative of specific dynamics and structures within the organisations and the different organisations that patients may be transferred to locally. That said I can confirm that both organisations have shared their respective policies and agreed inclusions to both that are reflective of the Regulation 28 report.

#### Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP) response

CWP has identified that the following statements in relation to the timeframe for transfer of care should be included in its policy 'Admission, Discharge and Transfer of Care Policy' as additional practice guidance for staff. The additional statements read:-

*"This will be completed within a timeframe of 28 days but may have to be expedited if there are concerns about the person's risk profile and mental health."*

*"The referral will go to the single point of access service of the relevant receiving trust."*

An action plan has been developed and includes the Trust's own findings from its investigation in relation to documentation and record keeping which fell short of the Trust's expectations. The updated policy and action plan will be approved at the Trust's Quality Committee on 6 September 2017 and will detail the timetable for each individual action, which will again be monitored by the Quality Committee. Learning will be shared Trustwide through the Learning from Experience Report in September 2017 and through the locality governance structures.

#### Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust (MCFT) response

I have enclosed the key changes that have been made to policy following the Regulation 28 report at Appendix 1.

I can confirm that the outcome of the inquest hearing and the required changes to the policy have been circulated within MCFT through operational management meetings, consultant forums and via Quality Practice Alert (QPA). I can also confirm that the QPA was issued prior to the Inquest hearing on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 as part of the Trust's processes of learning from this incident. This included clear guidance on what is expected of teams when a patient is being transferred from one organisation to another. The contents of the QPA included -:

*"The importance of timely and comprehensive handover of information, both verbal and written when transferring service users from one care team to another cannot be overstated and underpins the guidance above. This applies to CPA and non CPA service users."*

The inclusion of the above statements will ensure that CWP and MCFT, (once both Trust's amendments have completed their respective governance ratification processes) have policies that are compatible.

I can also confirm that the respective CWP and MCFT teams involved have also had specific feedback.

An audit of transfer processes based on the amended policies will be considered for inclusion in each Trust's Junior Doctor Audit programme.

I hope that this response adequately addresses the concerns you have raised, however please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide further clarification.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. M. J.', written in a cursive style.

[Redacted]

Director of Patient Safety