

Learning from the failings at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust - Francis inquiry

A message from Nick Carver, Chief Executive, East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

On the 6 February 2013, Robert Francis QC published the recommendations of the inquiry he chaired that looked at the failings of care within the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust between 2005 and 2009.

Data shows that there were between 400 and 1,200 more deaths at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust than would have been expected. The Francis report describes clearly the *"....appalling and unnecessary suffering of hundreds of people..."*, who were *"....failed by a system which ignored the warning signs and put corporate self-interest and cost control ahead of patients and their safety."*

Key recommendations

The report made 290 recommendations aimed at ensuring patients are put first. In particular, it recommended:

- The merger of the regulation of care into one body - two are currently involved
- Senior managers to be given a code of conduct and the ability to disqualify them if they are not fit to hold such positions
- Hiding information about poor care to become a criminal offence
- A statutory obligation on doctors and nurses for a duty of candour so they are open with patients about mistakes
- An increased focus on compassion in the recruitment, training and education of nurses, including an aptitude test for new recruits and regular checks of competence as is being rolled out for doctors.

The implications for the Trust's hospitals

As a Trust, we – like all hospital groups across the NHS – are committed to learning from the failings that took place at Mid Staffordshire.

Robert Francis made it clear that his recommendations represent:

"...not the end but the beginning of a journey towards a healthier culture in the NHS in which good practice in one place is not considered to be a reason for ignoring poor practice somewhere else; where personal responsibility is not thought to be satisfied by a belief that someone else is taking care of it; where protecting and serving patients is the conscious purpose of everything everyone thinks about day in day out."

He added that:

".....patients are entitled to be the first and foremost consideration of the system and all those who work in it."

Our next steps

In the light of the events at Mid Staffordshire, here at the East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust we have reviewed our systems and processes, benchmarked our staffing levels and are confident that we provide best practice levels of care, which we will continue assessing.

We monitor carefully what others say about our services and actively encourage and involve our patients, staff, commissioners, HealthWatch and other representatives in helping us to identify ways we can keep improving.

We acknowledge, however, that there is more we can and should do. Patient care is not just the responsibility of those who work directly with patients on a day-to-day basis. It is the responsibility of the Board's members, our partner organisations and all staff who work in our hospitals.

The [Trust Board has reviewed](#) the Francis report and its recommendations, and as a consequence, has asked our staff to consider what improvements they could make in their own areas. The key lessons from the Francis report, is that we individually and collectively, whatever our role within the Trust, must redouble our efforts in striving to become *amongst the best* in providing the best possible care for our patients.

Our focus will remain, therefore, on placing the needs of our patients at the heart of everything we do and ensuring that each of us operates in accordance with the Trust's values:

P - We put our *patients* first;

I - We strive for excellence and continuous *improvement*;

V - We value *everybody*;

O - We are *open* and honest;

T - We work as a *team*.

The review began at our Board meeting in February 2013. We have already taken steps to consider the impact of the recommendations for the Trust and how we may further improve patient care, including:

- Our Director of Nursing, Angela Thompson is working with focus groups consisting of nurses, midwives and other staff and patients from across our hospitals to assess in detail the recommendations from the Francis report and the implications for patient care and service delivery
- Our top 500 leaders are engaged in a similar process through our ARC organisational development programme
- And we are seeking to put every single member of our staff through customer care training before the end of the year

The findings of our review will be implemented in ways that will help ensure our patients and local people, as well as staff and volunteers, have confidence in the way that we work. It will also help restore public faith in the NHS, some of which may have been lost as a result of Mid Staffordshire.

Dealing with concerns

In the meantime I have reiterated - to all our staff - their absolute duty to ensure our patients receive the very best care and to take responsibility for dealing with, and addressing, any concerns they may have about the care we provide. Fundamentally, they must not ignore such concerns or think they are for someone else to deal with.



Nick Carver
Chief Executive

Useful information

[Francis – press statement](#) | [Francis – Executive summary](#) | [Francis – main report](#) | [Prime Minister's statement on Mid Staffordshire](#)