



June 2010

The Medway LINK Response to Medway NHS Foundation Trust Quality Account – 2009 / 2010

The Medway LINK would like to thank Medway NHS Foundation Trust for the opportunity to comment on their Quality Account. The LINK has assembled information from a range of sources to inform its response using qualitative and quantitative data and academic input from the Centre for Health and Social Care Research at Canterbury Christ Church University.

This comment is split into the four areas that the Quality Account is intended to do.

1. Aiding public understanding

It is felt that the introductory statement from the Chief Executive is clear, positive and forward thinking and that the general public will be able to understand the content. The document does however contain some management jargon, unexplained acronyms and tables of statistics that the general public may struggle to comprehend. There is important information missing throughout the document and a lack of explanation regarding the data, its relevance to patients and how it will impact on quality of care.

Many of the graphs appear to contain meaningless data that is unconnected to quality. For example, the table on page 19 about 'Grade of Harm' does not explain to the reader what has been achieved and could therefore be perceived as alarming. The tables and statistics could be explained in more detail and may be better placed in appendices rather than in the body of the report.

There is a lack of flow and structure to the document, such as explaining where the Trust started; what they have done to make improvements and what they are focusing on in the coming year. There is therefore a strong sense that the Trust is not selling themselves as effectively as they could do, by failing to fully explain areas such as consultation and engagement which the Trust is regarded by the LINK as being good at.

2. Improvements made

The Quality Account does not specify the Trust's targets for 2009 / 10 under each national priority area, and where it makes claims for improvement it does not provide evidence for these. For example, the Trust claims to have the best rates for MRSA in the south east, yet the graph on page 18 indicates an increase in cases without any explanation of why this might have occurred.

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Targets for improvement are unclear and not meaningful with no suitable baselines provided and a general lack of context. It is therefore difficult for the reader to judge whether improvements have been made.

There are some discrepancies, for example the patient recommendation metric on page 20 where the description does not match the progress. However, the actual narrative on progress is clear and meaningful, providing percentages which make the data easier to understand.

3. Priorities for 2010 / 11

It is unclear as to how and why the priorities were decided, for example why uptake on breastfeeding was chosen as a local priority in order to improve clinical effectiveness. Targets are vague with no measurable targets or baselines set out which makes it difficult to ascertain whether the Trust will achieve what it has set out to do.

4. Who has been involved in the preparation of the Quality Account

The Trust is known to be good at engaging with patients and involving stakeholders. It claims to have done so regarding their Quality Account. However, there is very little evidence provided that this has taken place.

The issues set out do not seem to be representing public thinking. Feedback from interviews and Focus Groups suggested that areas for focus should be; better general communication (between departments / Trusts as well as to patients), better treatment for the elderly and improved administrative procedures.

There was a lot of positive feedback about the Trusts performance and many interviewees commented that the Trust and services it provides had improved immensely. It is felt that the Trust has not used this opportunity to highlight these within their Quality Account – an opportunity missed.

For and on behalf of Medway LINK

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Harris', written in a cursive style.

David Harris – Facilitator
Medway LINK Coordinating Team