

EXTRA-ORDINARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING (PRIVATE)
TUESDAY 10TH JANUARY 2017
11AM – 12 NOON, TRAINING ROOM 3 & 4

Review of Neonatal Services at the Countess of Chester Hospital NHS FT

Introduction

As a result of concerns raised by the clinical team regarding a higher than usual number of neonatal deaths from January 2015, together with inconclusive results from internal reviews, a number of actions were taken:

After discussion with, and with the agreement of, the Cheshire and Merseyside Neonatal Network the designation of the service was reduced to a Special Care Unit (SCU) caring for infants from a minimum of 32 weeks gestation.

An invited review was requested from the Royal College of Child Health and Paediatrics. A team consisting of two paediatricians with special interest in neonatology, plus a senior neonatal nurse manager and a lay reviewer visited and conducted interviews on 1st and 2nd September 2016 which led to the issuing of a final review with recommendations.

As a result of the review a formal HR process was instituted involving one member of the clinical staff which resulted in a subsequent “grievance” investigation and report which has also made a number of recommendations.

Actions

Following the review recommendations the secondary external case review has been commissioned and completed. As part of this case review a secondary pathology review of a small number of cases was advised and is in process with completion likely mid-January 2017.

A meeting has been held between the Governance and Neonatal Leads to align the reporting processes.

Following completion of the HR process a meeting was held between the staff member and her parents, the Chief Executive, Director of Nursing and Quality, Director of People and OD and Medical Director at which the findings and recommendations of the “grievance” were discussed and accepted.

A provisional communications plan has been drafted to include sharing the findings with groups to include staff, parents, stakeholders e.g. the C&M network, CCG, NHSI and NHSE Specialised Commissioning and the CQC, and the press. A meeting is also being arranged with H.M. Coroner for Cheshire.

Recommendations**The Board is asked to:**

- a. Accept the report of the invited review. (Attached)
- b. Support the Executive in implementing the review recommendations and issues described in the review, including:
 - Leadership & Team working
 - Communications and escalation
 - Recruitment and investment – in line with wider strategic context
- c. Support the Executive in assisting the staff member's return to work on the Neonatal Unit -the reviews having found no evidence of a single person's culpability – and in implementing the recommendations of the "grievance" investigation.
- d. Maintain current unit admission criteria and reserve its decision regarding the future service designation of the Neonatal Unit, this to be guided by the recommendations of the College review and Cheshire and Merseyside Women's and Children's Review.

Ian Harvey, Medical Director
10th January 2017

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