

Notes of a meeting held on 22 December 2016 at 2.00pm in Chief Executive Office, Countess of
Chester Hospital

Present:	Sue Letby (SL)	
	John Letby (JL)	
	Lucy Letby (LL)	
	Hayley Cooper (HC)	RCN Representative
	Karen Rees (KR)	Head of Nursing, Urgent Care
	Tony Chambers (TC)	Chief Executive
	Ian Harvey (IH)	Medical Director/Deputy Chief Executive
	Alison Kelly (AK)	Director of Nursing & Quality
	Sue Hodgkinson (SH)	Director of People & Organisational Development

TC welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

SL and JL asked if they could read a statement, a reflection on how they feel. They have been advised what they want to say and will provide a copy of the statement.

SL then read out the statement. SL advised that they recognised that AK/SH supported with KR/HC. SL added about the importance of this meeting; what we discuss in the meeting and how we manage the next steps. We have waited a long time for this.

AK and SH went through the letter related to the grievance.

TC explained that there had been an increase in mortality rates in NNU. We had been alerted to an increase, lots of investigation into the cause, we couldn't ignore the change in pattern and mortality rates. The second point is the explanation that the only reasonable cause was mischievous behaviour, but we never accepted this. In the spirit of protecting our staff, babies and the service, we downgraded the unit, undertook a robust internal investigation and announced the Royal College review. Unsubstantiated claims were made that the only common link was that Lucy was on duty.

We had a decision to make, and we could have contacted the police. However, we acted in the best interests of LL, staff and babies on unit. There is nothing fair about this but we acknowledge that the actions we've made were genuinely with the best interests of you, the babies and the unit. We never once believed that the only plausible action was action within the team, but we had to take reasonable actions.

SL Dr Steve Brearey (SB) held you to ransom, if Lucy didn't go off the unit.

TC If we had kept Lucy on the unit and something happened, then it could have been a self-fulfilling prophecy. We ensured the unit and Lucy were safe and that we could

understand the problems. IH will now share the Royal College review headlines, as it is still incomplete.

JL What has the review got to do with Lucy?

TC With the mortality rates on the unit, there could have been other factors to make sure things are safe. Sadly, this was never about fairness. I can apologise for the consequences of the actions, but it was in the best spirit of the unit.

LL But I had a right to know, it should have been right to know. That's my big thing. This hurt me a lot more.

TC Absolutely right.

JL What's the Trust policy? If there are serious allegations, do you phone the police under the policy?

TC We are within our rights to phone the police, but we didn't believe it.

LL But you couldn't be open with me. The trust has gone. Did you have a plan to inform me?

TC We can explore that. We can explore your transition back to the unit, that's what this meeting is about. How do we move on from where we are? We were as open and transparent as we could have been. But we wanted to protect you and support you in the transition.

To summarise, that was the intent and motivation behind the judgements and decisions made; we now want to work with you to make sure you transition safely and successfully back to the unit.

AK We have been regularly meeting with you and as we discussed with HC/KR, we wanted to do the right thing, at the time. We did that to protect you, help you, not to harm you.

JL But it made it 10 times worse.

LL At what point did you plan to tell me? I found out in September.

AK At that time.

JL But we wouldn't have been here then. Lucy should have been able to represent herself. In hindsight, the police could have been called.

- SL Have you investigated LL?
- LL No.
- IH It is a comprehensive review; it's not aimed at any one person. The only people who have seen it at this stage are the Executives, the Chairman, 2 consultants and senior nurse, who have seen a draft and any comments were sent back to the College. We are planning who/how we share it. LL is at the top of the list, staff, parents of the babies, and the coroner and then a wider conversation with people.
- LL Do you know when it will be? I was promised several weeks ago.
- IH The final part is with Alder Hey, but we will be sharing in the next few weeks, in the New Year. Part of this sharing is us as an organisation drawing a line; anyone steps over that full disciplinary policy may be used.
- SL Not what SB/RJ say about LL? That is why she was redeployed and no other reasons, she was removed from NNU by instructions from the unit. SB collaborated with others. LL was not on the ward for several of the deaths, so collaboration has gone on. Speaking honestly and from your recommendations, this all happened - you allowed it to happen. Cannot see 6 months down the line all this still going on. Someone, possibly you, taps you on your shoulder; you're the chief man, you could have stopped it. Given the opportunity, no heads on poles, nobody being realistic and saying we're doing wrong thing here. That's all I've got to say.
- TC Our ambition was to keep LL and the unit safe. It has taken longer to resolve than we hoped for. We had unexpected deaths, we have received an explanation by expert reviews.
- LL But SB doesn't want Lucy back on the unit.
- TC He doesn't run the organisation. We will be meeting in the New Year. We have learnt a lot, we are not an outlier, we have a safe unit. We will be meeting with the consultants early in the New Year. What I was thinking we would do is to share with them your statement Lucy?
- LL Will Karen be allowed to attend?
- AK/SH Yes, we've already agreed that in our meetings.
- TC It will be a tough meeting. We will discuss the recommendations of the Royal College review, behaviours we expect to see will be clearly described, and then