

Witness Name: [Ann
Ford]
Statement No.: [4]
Exhibits: [0]
Dated: [11 December
2024]

THIRLWALL INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF ANN FORD

I, Ann Ford, will say as follows: -

1. I am employed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as Director of Operations Network North, a post I started in 2022. Prior to this I have worked as CQC's Deputy Chief Inspector, Head of Local System Review and Head of Hospitals Inspection.
2. I have a background in Nursing and have over 20 years' experience in the regulation of health and social care,
3. I make this statement in response to the request from the Thirlwall Inquiry (the Inquiry) dated 6 December 2024, made under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006.
4. This statement has been prepared following consultation with current and where necessary, former colleagues at CQC in order to provide as accurate an account as possible.

Provision of documents from the Countess of Chester Hospital to CQC

5. In his oral evidence to the Inquiry on 29 November 2024, Ian Harvey, the former Medical Director at the Countess of Chester Hospital (CoCH) said "*I am sure that on receipt of [the draft Thematic Review], I would have forwarded it to whoever was responsible for sending the documentation through to the CQC ahead of their visit.*"
6. This statement will clarify CQC's position in relation to the provision of documents referred to by Ian Harvey in his evidence.

The Thematic Review

7. Following the disclosure exercise completed earlier this year, I do not believe CQC were in possession of the Thematic Review either before, during or after the February 2016 Inspection of CoCH. CQC has identified no documentation within its own records which supports Mr Harvey's assertion in his oral evidence, and I have not been made aware of any documentation disclosed by CoCH or by Mr Harvey to the Inquiry that supports his assertion.

The Brigham Review

8. I also do not believe CQC were in possession of the Brigham Review either before or during the 2016 inspection of CoCH.
9. CQC records show that we were later provided with a copy of this review via email on 24 April 2018. The review was provided to Helen Cain, CQC inspector, by Julie Fogarty, Associate Director of Risk and Safety at CoCH. This email is available to the Inquiry at INQ0106103.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

Signed:

PD

Dated: 11/12 2024