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Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

**Office of the
Postgraduate Dean**
St Chads Court
213 Hagley Road
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Sent via email

9th April 2021

Dear Both,

Re: Outcomes from HEE meeting with postgraduate medical trainees in Acute and General Medicine – 1st April 2021

As you will be aware the Postgraduate School of Medicine recently undertook a meeting with trainees in acute and general medicine following the emergence of concerns in December 2020 and subsequent assurances provided by the Trust. Outlined below are the key findings from our discussions with trainees:

1. Patient safety issues
2. Areas of concern
3. Good practice points

1. Patient Safety Issues

- **Prioritisation of patients:** The priority required by the nursing team and management team appears to differ from the medical staff, in that patients are prioritised based on their arrival time and not as clinical need. This can also cause friction and difficult interaction in the department.
- **Transfer of patients from ED to AMU:** It would appear that patients are being transferred from ED to AMU without any conversation or interaction with the medical team taking place, resulting in patients arriving without pre-notification. A number of transfers from ED appear inappropriate, with a lack of investigation into the patient conditions being carried out within

the ED. This also leads to some patients being seen in AMU who could have been pre-discharged.

- Post-take ward round: Trainees described having to “hunt for a consultant”, to undertake the post-take ward round, which in itself could lead to difficult and avoidable situations.

In the first instance, please can we request a Trust response against the Patient Safety concerns identified, to be submitted to QAMedical.wm@hee.nhs.uk by Friday 16th April 2021.

2. Areas of Concern

- Workload: Medical staffing appears a significant issue, with particular aspects being discussed. It appears there is a struggle to cover the second registrar and trainees reported that there is often a pulling of doctors away from the acute team to cover ward work. Trainees were not aware of non-medical staff being considered as a possible solution to such issues.
- Educational opportunities: Trainees reported that the post-take ward round is not used as an opportunity for teaching and feedback.
- Handover: It is understood that there is a Handover protocol in place, which is commendable, however it unfortunately appears that it is not followed. Trainees raised concerns over the effectiveness of handover, with the morning handover being described as “shabby”. Consultant attendance seems to be by exception despite it being an expectation according to the protocol. Often behaviour during handover is less than desirable with staff talking over each other and making the handover less effective.
- Patient record: The use of the electronic patient handover system ‘fusion’ was described as being unreliable and requires attention as well as needing to be embedded more within working practices.
- Annual leave: Trainees reported that despite requesting annual leave weeks in advance, they are not hearing back on their request without several prompts, causing some distress.
- Environment: Trainees raised concerns in relation to the poor behaviours of some of the staffing within AMU, having repercussions on their ability to work effectively together, particularly from some members of the nursing staff.
- Clinics: Despite some trainees reporting being able to access clinic, others reported having difficulties in accessing clinics particularly Internal Medicine stage 1 trainees.

- Training post: No General Practice or Foundation trainees would recommend the post as a place to train and only half of the registrar's trainees would recommend the post as a place to train.

Please can we request a Trust update against the 'Areas of Concern' in 6 weeks, due Friday 21st May 2021, to be submitted to QAMedical.wm@hee.nhs.uk.

3. Areas of Good Practice

- Access to Clinics: Certain speciality trainees reported being able to access clinics, specifically respiratory and gastroenterology.
- Teaching: In general teaching appears to have been maintained. Trainees reported that teaching has been maintained for foundation and general practice despite COVID challenges.
- Senior support: Trainees reported some good learning opportunities when consultants were involved.
- Educational Governance: The Educational team are aware of many of the issues discussed and improvement plans are in place. This is acknowledged and applauded although concerns have been raised for some time and changes are only now being implemented.

We are currently triangulating the concerns identified with our wider intelligence and will be in touch shortly to advise on the planned next steps in relation to the concerns that have been identified, however in the meantime should you wish to discuss any of these details further then please contact Andy Whallett (Andy.Whallett@hee.nhs.uk) who will be able to assist. We look forward to receiving the Trust response against the patient safety concerns by Friday 16th April 2021 and an update to the 'Areas of Concern' by Friday 21st May.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Russell Smith

Regional Postgraduate Dean, Midlands

Cc. Dr Andy Whallett, Deputy Postgraduate Dean, West Midlands

Cc. Leanne Clews, Head of Quality and Commissioning, Midlands

Cc. Kelly Smith, Senior Quality Lead, Midlands

Cc. Dr Phil Bright, Head of West Midlands Postgraduate School of Medicine, HEE

Cc. Dr Anthony Choules, Foundation School Director West Midlands North, HEE