# Press Release | 23 February 2022

**Healthcare regulator recognises significant improvements at QEH**

The significant progress that has been made at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King’s Lynn (QEH) in just three years between 2019 and 2022 has been recognised by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who have rated the Trust as ‘Good’ in all of the core services recently inspected and recommended the Trust moves out of the recovery support system (formerly special measures).

The CQC inspected three core services during their unannounced visit in December 2021 – Medicine, Urgent and Emergency Care (including the Emergency Department) and Critical Care. All three services were rated ‘Good’ overall.

The inspection team returned in January 2022 to complete a Well-Led inspection, which has resulted in a ‘Good’ rating for the Trust.

This means QEH is now CQC ‘Good’ in three domains – Caring, Well Led and Effective.

We are delighted to confirm that the Trust has been lifted out of special measures. QEH is one of the first Trusts in the country to be recommended to be lifted out of segment 4 of the System Oversight Framework, which, if approved, means we would no longer require ‘mandated intensive support’ from our Regulator.

The Deputy Chief Inspector of Hospitals for the CQC, Fiona Allinson, said: “I am pleased to see significant improvements have been made right across the trust in the care given to patients resulting in a number of its services being rated good. More importantly there’s been a significant increase in the quality of care being given to people in Norfolk using these services.

“The COVID-19 pandemic brought a number of additional challenges to the NHS, so staff are to be commended for the progress made at this particularly difficult time.

“The leadership team clearly understood the priorities and issues facing the trust and were focused on making continual and sustained improvements, which is why the rating for how well-led the trust is moves from inadequate to good.

“CQC will continue to monitor the trust, to ensure these fantastic improvements are embedded and further improvements are made.”

The CQC report described that: “Staff treated patients with compassion and kindness, respected their privacy and dignity and took account of their individual needs.” It said: “staff felt respected, supported and valued” and “there was a strong focus on quality improvement to improve patients’ care and outcomes” with “the Trust committed to improving services by learning when things went well, and when they went wrong.”

It went on to say that: “communication, inclusion and partnership working were some of the biggest improvements within the Trust.”

Professor Steve Barnett, Chairman, at QEH said: “This is an excellent report which is a reflection of everyone’s commitment to improving care for our patients and families and the experience for our staff over the last three years. It provides further external evidence and endorsement that QEH is well on the way to achieving its vision of becoming the best rural District General Hospital for patient and staff experience. We will use this feedback to appropriately celebrate our progress over the last three years, and to inform the areas of focus which are necessary over the coming year to ensure we continue to make year-on-year improvements for our patients, their families, local community and our staff.”

Caroline Shaw CBE, CEO, at QEH said: “The publication of today’s report is a really important moment and milestone for all of us. It is the result of a huge amount of hard work, focus and an absolute determination to continuously improve care and services for our patients and their families.

“This report shows how far QEH has come in the last three years, and that this Trust is well on the way to becoming the outstanding organisation that we all know it can become. Many congratulations to our Critical Care Team for being rated outstanding for Well-Led and having outstanding practice recognised in many areas, including patient safety, workforce developments and research and innovation projects.

“Importantly, the report also points to the areas in which we need to give even greater focus in the year to come. This includes leadership development across the organisation and continuing to do all we can to secure maximum capital investments so we can improve our decaying estate and the physical environment of our hospital. We know this is a key factor in delivering an outstanding experience for our patients, their families and staff.”

Alex Stewart, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Norfolk, said: “I am delighted to see that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has received such a positive inspection report from the CQC. The Board and Executive Management Team should be commended for helping drive the sustainable changes which have resulted in the Trust being taken out of Special Measures. It is also a huge testament to the dedication of all the staff who have worked tirelessly in the extreme circumstances resulting from the pandemic over the past two years.

“From a patient perspective, Healthwatch has seen an increase in patient satisfaction over the last 18-months and this too has been borne out by various national patient surveys. Healthwatch will continue to work with the Trust to ensure that patients and their carers remain at the forefront of any changes that the Trust may be considering introducing as we move forwards.”

Esme Corner OBE, Lead Governor, at QEH said: “On behalf of the Governors’ Council, I would like to congratulate and say thank you to every single member of Team QEH. I know just how much hard work has gone into this achievement and this must be recognised. I equally know that very strong foundations are now in place that will ensure sustainable and continuous improvements for patients, their families and the local communities we serve. There is much to look forward to as we look to 2022 and beyond, and the Governors look forward to being part of this exciting journey at QEH, recognising the best is yet to come.”

“Visit the [CQC website to view and download the full report](https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/RCX70/reports), or **click here** to read our frequently asked questions.”

**--ENDS--**

**Notes to Editors:**

To arrange an interview with Caroline Shaw, CEO, or for further information, please contact Charles Thomas, Acting Communications and Engagement Officer, [Charles.Thomas@qehkl.nhs.uk](mailto:Charles.Thomas@qehkl.nhs.uk) / 01553 613 216.

2019 (left) versus 2022 (right) results – high resolution JPEGS accompany press release:

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