



HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
19 JANUARY 2022

COMMENTARY AGAINST QUALITY ACCOUNTS

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to allow the Committee to review the procedure in place for the task of commenting on the Quality Accounts for the provider health trusts, specifically the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL), Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) and East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EMAS).

Background

2. Quality Accounts (QAs) are annual public facing reports to the public from providers of NHS healthcare about the quality of services they deliver. There is a legal requirement under the NHS (Quality Accounts) Regulations 2010 for all bodies who provide, or arrange to provide (sub-contract) NHS services to produce a QA.
3. The aim of a QA is to enhance accountability to the public and engage the leaders of an organisation in their quality improvement agenda. If designed well, the QA should assure commissioners, patients and the public that healthcare providers are regularly scrutinising each and every one of their services, concentrating on those that need the most attention.
4. Prior to 2015 local NHS Trusts attended meetings of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to present their Quality Accounts and seek feedback from the Committee on the clarity and content of the Accounts. NHS Trusts have a deadline within which they are required to publish the Quality Accounts and therefore the comments of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees must be received in advance of that deadline so they can be included in the final public version of the Quality Account. This meant that meetings of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had to be arranged prior to the deadline and this was not always possible. Members were of the view that whilst there was value in scrutiny making comments on the Accounts, the process was

somewhat onerous and the Committee's time would have been better spent on considering specific health issues.

5. At its meeting on 10 June 2015 the Committee agreed that rather than considering the Quality Accounts at a public meeting, the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Chairman and Spokesmen, would be asked to submit comments on behalf of the Committee. Such comments would have regard to the work of the Committee during the year in relation to the particular NHS body. The Chairman and Spokesmen would also be asked, in the process of scrutinising the declaration and formulating comments, to identify issues that would merit detailed consideration by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Arrangements would then be made for these would be brought to the Committee. It was thought that this was a more appropriate and less time-consuming method of producing a response than to arrange an additional meeting of the Committee.
6. Since 2015 the process has worked well. In the spring of each year the NHS Trusts submit a draft version of the Quality Account for that year to the County Council Chief Executive giving a deadline for the response from the Committee to be received. The Chief Executive then produces a draft response on behalf of the Committee which is reviewed by the Committee Chairman, Deputy Chairman and political group spokespersons outside of a public meeting. Amendments and additions to the comments may be suggested, and then the final version of the comments is sent by the Chief Executive to the NHS Trusts for inclusion in the final Quality Accounts for that year. This process has enabled the deadlines set by the NHS to be met whilst ensuring that the comments do reflect the views of Committee members and that at public meetings the Committee's time is spent on particular topics of interest.
7. The comments have been well received by the NHS Trusts and occasionally as a result of the Committee's comments on the draft Quality Account parts of the final Quality Account have been made clearer for the public to understand or more information has been provided.

Proposals/Options

8. The Committee is recommended to continue to delegate the role of commenting on the Quality Accounts of health provider organisations to the Chief Executive after consultation with the Chairman and Spokesmen on the basis outlined above.

Resource Implications

9. The proposed option is less resource intensive and more cost effective as it does not involve holding a face to face meeting of the Committee in public.

Background papers

Committee report 10 June 2015:

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s109619/Commentary%20Against%20Quality%20Accounts.pdf>

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust Quality Accounts:

<https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/aboutus/performance/publications-and-reports/quality-accounts/>

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust Quality Account 2020/21 (comments from the Committee on page 58):

<https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Quality-Account-2020.21-Final.pdf>

East Midlands Ambulance Service Quality Accounts:

<https://www.emas.nhs.uk/about-us/trust-documents/>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

None

Appendices

Appendix A – Leicestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments on the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust Quality Account for 2020/21

Appendix B - Leicestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments on the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust Quality Account for 2020/21

Appendix C - Leicestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments on the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust Quality Account for 2020/21

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