

## Sutherland Report 2013 – A Briefing

11 June 2013

### Executive Summary

Twelve months on from the publication of a critical review of its governance and management arrangements, the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) has commissioned a follow-up review - from the same review team - to assess progress against their earlier recommendations.

The new report describes the Trust as “open, honest, transparent, and supportive and focussed on the delivery of high quality care”. Its earlier report had criticised top down decision making.

The new review describes the Trust as “completely different and unrecognisable from our previous visits in a very positive way.” The team’s report says:

- Organisational culture has shifted from “punitive to supportive”
- Clinical engagement is now much more evident
- A recent organisational restructure was completed quickly and effectively
- This is enabling improvements in care quality and offering opportunities for improved stakeholder engagement
- The organisational restructure has also clarified to external stakeholders who is the responsible person, the *go to* person, when issues arise

### Background

In June 2012 the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) published an independent review of governance and management arrangements at the Trust (the Sue Sutherland report). The report was commissioned by the former Strategic Health Authority (NHS South of England) following concerns raised in two mental health homicides reviews.

The June 2012 report contained some serious criticisms of the Trust including:

- A lack of clinical engagement
- Top down decision making
- Slow incident reporting to the National Patient Safety Agency
- Little evidence of constructive internal dialogue
- Concerns over some aspects of safety.

Overall the report noted a Trust culture that was “centralist, top down, target driven, bureaucratic and controlling”. It said, “There is an urgent need to change the culture and leadership from one of central control to one in which all staff are positively engaged in determining and delivering safe, high quality care.”

### **Implications of the June 2012 report**

The report resulted in significant negative media coverage for the Trust but – perhaps more importantly – it also resulted in a loss of faith among commissioners and other health stakeholders and was associated with low staff morale. The report was followed by the departure of the Trust’s former chairman and former chief executive.

The Trust immediately appointed a new chairman (Anthony Gallagher) and towards the end of 2012 appointed a new chief executive (Iain Tulley). The Trust then embarked upon a major programme of change designed to address the organisational and service shortcomings identified in the June 2012 report.

The Trust and local health commissioners have now commissioned the same review team to undertake a further review to assess progress to date.

### **The June 2013 report**

The review team’s report has now been completed and it concludes that “at Trust and locality level we observed the organisation to be completely different and unrecognisable from our previous visits in a very positive way.”

Specifically the report says:

- The recent organisational restructure was completed quickly and effectively and is enabling improvements in care quality not least by simplifying care pathways and offering opportunities for improved stakeholder engagement
- The organisational restructure has also clarified to external stakeholders who is the responsible person, the *go to* person, when issues arise
- The new Chief Executive and newly appointed Chairman have succeeded in quickly changing the organisational culture from punitive to supportive.
- The culture was now “open, honest, transparent, and supportive and focussed on the delivery of high quality care.”
- Members of staff interviewed by the review team were more “energetic, committed and excited about the future.”
- There was evidence of a mutually supportive executive team who were focussed on the quality of care
- Clinical engagement is now evident through clinical directors and lead clinicians who feel involved in decision making and who value their newly gained autonomy to act.

The report also comments on the Swindon Crisis Team where problems had previously been identified. The report says, "We were also particularly impressed with the change to the Swindon Crisis Team, who following our previous visit had implemented a number of initiatives, driven by a very able manager, achieving transformational results."

## **Conclusion**

The Trust has welcomed publication of this new review but has reiterated its commitment to continued improvement. The Trust is determined not to be complacent about recent progress. Much has been achieved but there remains more to be done.

Commenting on the report the chief executive, Iain Tulley, said: "I warmly welcome this report. It paints a very positive picture of the progress the Trust has made over the past twelve months. The key to this change has been a drive to simplify targets and benchmarks, and a determined focus upon patient care. There remain many challenges ahead. We are not there yet but it is good to see that we are making progress and are on an improving trajectory."

The Trust chairman, Anthony Gallagher said: "It is particularly encouraging to me that the very same independent review team that were rightly critical of the Trust twelve months ago should now see such a positive transformation. I do believe that the relationship with our commissioners, in particular, is now on a much more positive footing. This said I think we should be confident about future progress but not complacent. There remains much to be done. We will now get on and do it."