

30 October 2014

Brian Stables
Chair
Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust
Combe Park
Bath
BA1 3NG

Via e-mail

Dear Brian

Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust (“the Trust”): Application for NHS foundation trust status

I wrote to you today under separate cover in relation to the Trust’s authorisation as an NHS foundation trust. This letter deals with certain matters which emerged during the scrutiny of your application.

A&E 4 hour performance target

Monitor’s Board found that the Trust meets the criteria for authorisation as set out in section 5.3.2.3 of “Applying for NHS foundation trust status: A guide for applicants” dated 1 October 2013 - ‘How is the applicant performing against the quality performance threshold’.

The Trust is currently scoring a ‘1.0’ under the quality performance threshold as it has breached the four hour A&E target in four of the past six quarters (Q1 and Q4 2013/14 and Q1 and Q2 2014/15). Under the Risk Assessment Framework (RAF) this would trigger a potential governance concern.

Since the Board to Board meeting on 11 August 2014, the Trust has developed an action plan - the “4 Hour Improvement Plan/Monitor update on 4 hour performance 9/10/14” (“the Plan”), reviewed and assured by ECiST in October 2014, and a trajectory that shows how it can achieve sustained compliance with the four hour performance target by Q4 2014/15. The Trust’s Plan identifies actions that are fully within its internal control and those that will require the support of its local health economy (LHE) partners. Each action is aligned to an estimate of the reduction in breaches in which it will result and the resulting trajectory is apportioned between

those actions that the Trust can deliver internally and those that are reliant on support from LHE partners.

In arriving at its decision to authorise the Trust, Monitor's Board took the Plan into account and it is therefore important that the Trust continues to embed these changes and delivers the actions in the Plan which are the Trust's responsibility, within the timescales indicated.

As a consequence, Monitor's Board expects the Trust Board to provide Monitor with formal assurance that progress is being made towards meeting the A&E four hour target on a sustainable basis.

Reporting to Monitor

We understand that you are already implementing improvements in the areas set out above. To enable us to evaluate this, we expect your Board to provide monthly formal assurance to your Monitor Provider Regulation relationship team that you are making progress with the Plan.

This information should be in the form of your existing internal governance reporting on delivery of the Plan, rather than creating new or additional information. We would expect this information to be submitted on a monthly basis until it is agreed with your relationship team that it is no longer required. Your relationship team will follow up on this reporting by exception.

In order to provide us with the assurance that you are delivering the Plan, the information submitted to us should cover the following areas:

1. The actions the Trust has undertaken to:
 - a. evaluate the effectiveness of the Step Up plan in accordance with the timeline set out in Appendix 4 of the Plan;
 - b. fully implement the Plan and broader Urgent Care Improvement Programme, as outlined in Appendix 7 of the Plan, including expected milestones for delivery, in line with documented timescales; and
2. an update on future versions of the Plan, including new actions and revised timescales
3. the steps taken to address ECIST's independent assessment of the Plan
4. progress made by LHE partners in implementing the actions in the Plan for which they are responsible.

These actions are additional to compliance with all of the conditions of the Trust's licence and to the reporting requirements set out in the Risk assessment framework of 27 August 2013 (Appendix C updated April 2014).

Notwithstanding these important issues, we should like to congratulate you and your team on the hard work and your successful application. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan Hanham', written in a cursive style.

Baroness Joan Hanham CBE

Chair

cc: David Bennett – Chief Executive
Paul Streat – Regional Director - South, Provider Regulation
David Flory – Chief Executive, NHS Trust Development Authority