



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

press release

7 September 2016

RQIA Publishes Royal Victoria Hospital Inspection Report

Today, RQIA has published the findings of its acute hospital inspection of the Royal Victoria Hospital. This unannounced inspection took place last December as part of RQIA's ongoing programme of to provide assurance to the public about the quality of hospital services, and to contribute to improvements in the delivery of care.

Our inspection was conducted over three days by a multidisciplinary team of medical, nursing, pharmacy and allied health professional peer reviewers and lay assessors, led by RQIA's healthcare team. The team visited a medical and a surgical ward and the Emergency Department and assessed whether the care was safe, effective and compassionate. We also considered how each area was being led and managed.

Olive Macleod, RQIA's Chief Executive, said: **“At the Royal Victoria Hospital, RQIA's inspection team spoke to patients, relatives and staff; observed how care was being delivered; and examined care records. In the Acute Medical Unit, we found evidence of strong multi-disciplinary teamwork, with staff who understood their roles and responsibilities, and an open and transparent incident and complaint management culture.**

“At the new Emergency Department, governance and leadership were strong, and staff morale was good, with staff stating they felt supported by management. However, inspectors considered that crowding was an issue, with an increase in patient numbers in the afternoon and evening, making it challenging for staff to provide nursing care and maintain the privacy and dignity of their patients.”

“The inspection team found that improvements were needed in the surgical ward inspected. In this ward, a number of clinical records were not updated or completed in line with guidelines. During the inspection, there was a large number of non-surgical patients in this ward. This impacted on the ward functioning as designed - for the treatment of emergency surgical patients.”

At the end of the inspection, RQIA’s inspection team provided feedback to management at the Belfast Trust, highlighting both areas of good practice and concerns requiring attention by the trust.

RQIA’s Chief Executive concluded: **“RQIA recognises that increases in the number of admissions places additional pressure on staff in ensuring the provision of safe effective and compassionate care. However, it is vitally important that this continues to be delivered even at times of such pressures.”**

“RQIA commends the committed, caring and sensitive staff at the Royal, who treat their patients with dignity. We believe through our ongoing inspection programme, we can support further improvements in the quality of care for all those attending hospitals in Northern Ireland.”

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Editors' Notes

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, established in April 2005 under *The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003*, is the independent health and social care regulatory body for Northern Ireland. In its work RQIA encourages continuous improvement in the quality and availability of health and social care services through a programme of inspections and reviews.

Background to RQIA's Programme of Acute Hospital Inspections

In April 2014, the RQIA was asked by the Health Minister to put in place appropriate arrangements to deliver a rolling programme of unannounced inspections in acute hospitals in Northern Ireland to commence during 2015-16. (See: www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/official-reports/plenary/2013-14/hansard_report_080414---revised.pdf).

In a statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly in early July 2014 (see: www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/official-reports/plenary/2013-14/revised-plenary-1.7.14.pdf), the Minister indicated that the programme of inspection will focus on a selection of quality indicators that will not be pre-notified to the trusts for each inspection, and no advance warning will be provided to trusts as to which sites or services within a hospital will be visited as part of an unannounced inspection. It is intended that the RQIA inspection reports will be published on a hospital-by-hospital basis as they are completed.

The aim of the Acute Hospital Inspection Programme is to provide public assurance; and to promote public trust and confidence in the delivery of acute hospital services. It is designed to support HSC Trusts to understand how they deliver care, identify what works well and where further improvements are needed. The framework is in line with Quality 2020 focusing on increasing the quality of care and reducing patient harm.

The inspection framework has been designed to support the Core Programme of Acute Hospital Inspections and to assess leadership and management of the clinical area, and three key stakeholder outcomes:

- **Is care safe?** Avoiding and preventing harm to patients and clients from the care, treatment and support that is intended to help them.
- **Is care effective?** The right care, at the right time in the right place with the best outcome.
- **Is care compassionate?** Patients and clients are treated with dignity and respect and should be fully involved in decisions affecting their treatment, care and support.

Further details, including the inspection documentation, are available on RQIA's website. (See: <https://www.rqia.org.uk/guidance/guidance-for-service-providers/hospitals/>)

From 7 September 2016, the report will be available at: www.rqia.org.uk.