1. INTRODUCTION

The Secretary of State for Health proposed to review the quality of care for older people in the NHS in a process to be undertaken by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who developed a targeted inspection programme to take place in acute NHS hospitals. This considers whether older people are treated with dignity and respect and whether their nutritional needs are being met. The CQC Inspectors selected wards from 100 NHS Hospitals, and advised that Hospitals were chosen partly on what was known about them from their quality risk profiles, as well as some selected at random. The Trust was advised that the visit to Walkergate Hospital was a random visit ie. no concerns had been raised about practice.

The Inspection followed existing CQC methods and systems using specific interview and observation tools to obtain a greater understanding of Ward activity. The review focussed on two main outcomes of the essential standards of quality and standards ie:

- Outcome 1 - Respecting and involving people who use the services
- Outcome 5 – Meeting nutritional needs.

2. WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY

During mid morning on 12th April 2011 the Nursing and Patient Services Director was advised that four Inspectors had arrived at Walkergate Hospital. The Inspectors were subsequently met there by the Nursing and Patient Services Director, Head of Nursing for Walkergate and TH Matron from the Care of the Elderly Directorate. The lead CQC Inspector described the process and of their plan to visit Wards where older people were being cared for. During the inspection the emphasis was to be on observing quality of care given to older people and this included whether patients were helped to eat or drink if they needed it and if they were treated with respect.

During the visit, which lasted approximately five hours, the Inspectors talked to patients, relatives and carers as well as frontline and senior staff. A wide range of observations were recorded about the general environment and care provision including the mealtime process. Patient records were scrutinised, as well as care plans, and inspectors considered the various preferences and choices of patients and how they were documented and monitored.

The Inspection team comprised:-

- 2 x CQC Compliance Inspectors
• 1 x Practicing Senior Nurse from another area

• A fourth member of the Team who was described as an ‘expert by experience’ ie. previous service user who could provide the patient perspective.

It was made clear that Senior Trust staff were not expected to be in attendance as it was frontline staff whom the Inspectors wished to talk to.

3. FEEDBACK

The Inspectors briefed the Nursing and Patient Services Director, Head of Nursing Freeman and the Matron from Care of the Elderly at the end of the visit. The stressed that feedback was high level at this stage, and noted that they had received a wide range of written notes and requested a lot of additional evidence which they would need to review in accordance with their usual process. This information is then triangulated, summarised and the Trust receives a formal response.

The final report has now been received and was published on the CQC website on 7th July 2011.

The overall findings of the inspectors are that “we found that Walkergate Hospital was meeting both of the essential standards of quality and safety we reviewed”.

The report is extremely positive and reflects the excellent feedback from patients and visitors about the experiences of patients and their families. A number of comments are included:

• “Staff are excellent and very caring”
• “They look after us well”
• “All good, no complaints, best care ever”
• “Yes they have a good way of treating you”

The Management Team and staff at Walkergate have been sent the report and have been formally thanked, on behalf of the Trust, for their excellent work. A copy of the report is attached for information.

4. RECOMMENDATION

To i) note the content of this briefing and ii) comment accordingly.

Helen Lamont
Nursing & Patient Services Director
8th July 2011