

THE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

MEMBERS COUNCIL

REPORT ON SECOND VISIT TO WALKERGATE HOSPITAL

At the invitation of the former Matron for Elderly Care, I returned to Walkergate at the end of January, having made a previous visit in April 2007. The previous visit had highlighted six issues, where it was considered by the Matron that the hospital would benefit if these points could be addressed. They were: the installation of an additional toilet on Ward 3, attention to some outdoor security lighting at night, the removal of one set of old rubber doors, the installation of additional ward fax machines, some better food servery system in place of the "orange boxes", and consideration of some regular maintenance support for small repairs.

The general impression of the hospital on this visit was very favourable. The patients appeared to be well cared for, the place was well painted, all areas looked clean, the staff seemed to be on the ball and clinical staff were visible. There were plans for the grounds to undergo a planting programme in the Spring.

Patients responses about general care were positive and favourable. The new Matron was mentioned quite spontaneously by one of the sisters, as already having shown her commitment to keeping standards at the hospital to a high level.

Attention to the Six Points:-

When the six points were first explained to the Executive Directors in May 2007, the response was very positive.

The additional toilet to Ward 3 had been fitted and was working effectively.

Security had been improved, in that some of the lighting to the outside had been revamped.

No additional fax machines had yet been installed - it was explained how the outgoing BT lines created some sort of problem.

Small repairs were receiving better attention now from Estates.

The pair of old rubber doors were still in place. However, an outer set of normal double doors had been installed.

Food served from the "orange boxes" remains an issue. The food itself is alright and the patients do not appear to complain much. From a dignity and presentation perspective, the group as a whole were not impressed with the fact that food was being served from either ordinary tables or trolleys. The food inspection group had seen food delivery at its best at the NGH. The view from those Governors is that the boxes really should be replaced with individual ward hostess trolleys.

Overall, the visit was, as ever, a very pleasant experience.

**Peter Atkinson  
Public Governor  
February 2008**