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Dear Linsay

Thank you for your recent report into mental Services (dated May 2016).

As a provider we recognise the contribution Healthwatch make to the care and treatment of our local population and their families and carers.

With the report (Recommendation Four) you have asked for mental health service providers to consider how to improve our communication with carers and to re-examine their confidentiality procedures to ensure that practice genuinely reflects patients' wishes.

In response to the above, I would like to assure you that the Trust recognises the true value of carers in supporting not only our patients but the work of the Trust and has recognised that we need to improve our support to carers and have committed to this improvement.

To demonstrate this, the Trust Board has recently approved a new joint patients and carers strategy which lays out our commitment to carers. To deliver this strategy a patient and carers group has been established and a key member is one of the Trust Governors who is also a long term carer.

The strategy and group is in its infancy but an early review has highlighted the fact that we need to have external agencies such as Healthwatch as part of that group, and would like to use this opportunity to extend an invite to yourselves to support this important piece of work.

As you know we do have a legal duty to protect patients confidentiality, however in response to complaints and lessons learned from a serious incident, the Trust has reminded staff of the importance of listening to carers and on seeking advice when they have any concerns on breaches of confidentiality or confusion over patient's wish. If information can't be shared this is fully explained to relatives and/or carers.

I hope this answers your questions on the above, if you are able to put forward a representative for the above group or have any further concerns please contact Jules

Williams our Deputy Director responsible for patient experience who would be more than happy to meet with your or individuals to discuss. [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Teresa Cope
Chief Operating Officer