

CC/MB/MC

Email: pqmidwestacute@hse.ie

25th July 2023

Mr Martin Browne TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

PQ 33618/23

To ask the Minister for Health the reasons for a lack of awareness of the complaints management system as referenced in the June 2023 HIQA Report of an Inspection Against the National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare concerning UHL; the measures that will be taken to address this; his views on how this affects accuracy of complaints received; and if he will make a statement on the matter statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Browne,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Publication of the HIQA report arising from its inspection at UHL in February 2023 provides some assurance that measures introduced to improve flow in the hospital and in the community are having a positive impact on patient care.

We also welcome the explicit acknowledgement in the report that overcrowding in our Emergency Department will remain the unfortunate reality until the fundamental mismatch between the demand on our services and our inpatient bed capacity is addressed.

The report reflects an overall increase in compliance with the national standards since the previous inspection. Of the 15 standards assessed in the ED and across the hospital, UHL was found to be compliant in one instance, substantially compliant in seven, partially compliant in five and non-compliant in two. The areas of non-compliance relate in the main to physical infrastructure in our older nightingale wards and to patient dignity and respect in our Emergency Department.

Overall, the report is positive about management and governance structures; patient safety and risk management arrangements; workforce planning and the kindness and professionalism of our staff. It is significant that every one of the patients who spoke to the HIQA inspectors during their two-day visit spoke positively of the staff at University Hospital Limerick.

The compliance plan published with the HIQA Report includes measures being taken by UL Hospitals Group to build on the acknowledged progress on integrated care pathways and hospital avoidance; to address staffing deficits; to increase bed capacity; to improve operational effectiveness and other matters.

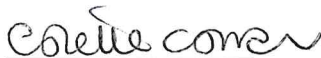
In relation to the complaints process, there has been a concerted effort to promote and encourage patients and their families to make complaints when they are unhappy with the services provided to them by UL Hospitals Group.

We have established a Patient Experience Steering Committee at UL Hospitals Group which has representatives from all our hospital sites and our Patient Council. This Group ensures that there is clear signage for patients and their families to make complaints. This includes posters promoting the HSE's official complaints management process 'Your Service Your Say' on all of our inpatient wards. Your Service Your Say leaflets are also placed on the lockers on each inpatient bed and are also available in public areas.

In addition, monthly training is facilitated for staff around our complaints management process. Our staff are provided with communications training to ensure that they can effectively engage with patients and their families to resolve issues raised at the point of contact. Our designated complaints officers have also completed a number of training sessions on effectively managing complaints, effective response writing and drafting recommendations.

I trust this clarifies the position, please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group