

Monday 13 September 2021

Governance within health and social care has improved since 2018 but more remains to be done

Comptroller and Auditor General issues latest report

Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), Lynn Pamment, has today 13 September 2021 published a report on ***Governance Arrangements for Health and Social Care - Follow up***.

The report follows up progress made by the Government of Jersey in implementing the recommendations contained in the 2018 Report from the then C&AG. In particular, it evaluates the extent to which progress has been made in:

- the arrangements established to manage, monitor and report on implementation of agreed recommendations
- the progress made in implementing agreed recommendations
- the extent to which the changes made have been evaluated to ensure they address the improvement areas identified in the 2018 Report; and
- the adequacy of plans for the implementation of any outstanding recommendations.

Lynn Pamment found that, since the 2018 Report, there has been some progress in implementing recommendations made. However, where progress has been made it has been focussed on the Health and Community Services Department (HCS) rather than the whole Government health and social care system or the wider Island health and social care system.

Out of the 22 recommendations made in 2018:

- six have been implemented in full (although there is scope for further improvements in implementing two of these recommendations)
- 12 have been partially implemented with more work required for full implementation; and
- four have not been implemented.

The C&AG noted that a HCS Board has been established with supporting assurance committees focussed on HCS functions. However the three assurance committees act as HCS wide management groups, rather than providing assurance to the HCS Board. In addition, the current model of governance for health and social care is focussed on HCS

and does not have a clear rationale in terms of other Government provided services and the wider health and social care system. As a consequence, there remain gaps, duplications and misalignments in accountability and governance for health and social care within Government.

The C&AG found that significant progress has been made since 2018 in setting out an overall Jersey Performance Framework linking down through the Government Plan to departmental objectives and business plans for individual Government departments, including HCS. However there would be benefit in documenting a longer term strategy for health and wellbeing including an analysis of healthcare needs and actions planned to reduce healthcare inequalities and improve health and social care outcomes.

The C&AG noted that, despite an improvement in performance on complaints handling since 2018, there is still a significant volume of HCS complaints that is not responded to within the target timescales.

The C&AG welcomed the publication by HCS of its Quality and Performance Report for June 2021. Making such reports available to the public moves Jersey towards best practice seen in other jurisdictions. She considers that there should be an ambition to extend further the scope and nature of routine public reporting of the performance of all elements of health and social care.

The C&AG recommends publication of an Annual Quality Account to include:

- details of performance against the HCS quality strategy
- a review of performance over the previous year across the domains of patient/service user safety, clinical effectiveness and patient/service user experience
- identification of and progress made in identified areas of improvement
- the outcomes of clinical audit
- the outcomes and recommendations from internally commissioned external clinical services reviews undertaken in the year
- action taken and proposed in respect of clinical audit and other reviews of services
- core quality indicators, including benchmarking of performance over time and against other health and social care systems where possible and appropriate
- the volume and themes from feedback including feedback from patients/service users, system partners, complaints and whistleblowing; and
- key themes from staff surveys with actions planned in response to staff feedback.

Lynn Pamment said:

“Since the 2018 Report, governance within HCS has visibly moved forward. This is evidenced by;

- the HCS Board, the supporting assurance committees and executive oversight; and
- new and improved systems for standards, regulation, risk management, performance management, business planning, whistleblowing and handling complaints.

However, there remain recommendations from 2018, all of which were accepted by Government, that are yet to be implemented. What HCS now needs to focus on in the next stage of governance development are the capacity and capability of those involved in governance, including ensuring shared values, skills and culture.

The health and social care system on the Island includes HCS, other Government delivered services and non-Government service providers such as care homes, charities, doctors, dentists and pharmacies. Developments since 2018 have focussed on HCS despite many of the recommendations being system-wide recommendations.

The system-wide governance arrangements, encompassing this wider range of providers, will become more important as Jersey moves to a 'community based (out of hospital), person centred, integrated health and social care model' as intended by the implementation of the Jersey Care Model. Future governance arrangements will need to evolve to recognise this."

The report *Governance Arrangements for Health and Social Care - Follow up* can be found at: <https://www.jerseyauditoffice.je>

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