

18th July 2018

Dear Patient

We recently wrote to you apologising for the difficulty a significant number of you were having in contacting the Practice by telephone and for the unacceptably long waiting times associated with our 'online triage' system.

These two issues are among several failings that have been highlighted in a report to be published by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The national inspection body has rated Unity Health's services as 'inadequate' and placed our two surgeries in 'special measures'.

Effectively this means that we were found not to be meeting national standards in a number of areas, including weaknesses in the management of potential risks to patient safety, arrangements for monitoring and reviewing prescribing, complaints handling, governance and effective systems to regularly monitor staff competency levels.

As a result, we will be closely monitored by the CQC over the coming weeks to ensure that we act quickly to address these shortcomings.

Naturally, this news comes as a huge disappointment to all of the staff working at Unity Health. We also appreciate that it has the potential to cause you to be concerned and we apologise most sincerely for that.

We wanted to take this opportunity to reassure you and let you know that we are doing everything in our power to put things right quickly and to get a speedy re-inspection that will take us out of special measures.

Anticipating some of what the inspectors might say in their report, we have already put a number of key improvement measures in place, including:

- Instigating a series of changes to our telephone system and taking on new call handling staff;
- Suspending the online triage service until further notice;
- Pausing the registration of any new patients;

- Changing the contract cleaning company responsible for Wenlock Terrace surgery and approving the replacement of all carpeted areas with easy-to-maintain vinyl flooring;
- Bringing in additional governance support from the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP);
- Overhauling the complaints system to ensure all concerns are responded to comprehensively and in a timely manner;
- Drawing up a new process to document and learn from any significant adverse events;
- Working with an experienced nurse manager to redesign the skill mix and training of staff;
- Carrying out a full health and safety audit across all of our premises.

Staff across the Practice will be addressing the CQC's other concerns over the summer and I know they will be grateful for your continued support at what is going to be an extremely busy time for all of us.

Finally, as well as responding to the CQC, we will be reaching out to you and other patients in the coming months to ask you where you think we can be doing better. We would urge you to make your views known so that we can build a full picture of what's really important to you and your family.

If you have concerns about the CQC report that are not addressed here, please don't hesitate to contact us via email admin.unityhealth@nhs.net or by attending one of three Saturday morning drop in sessions from 9am-10.30am on 21st July, 28th July or 4th August at our Kimberlow Hill surgery.

If you would like to read the full CQC inspection findings, they can be downloaded from the Practice website in due course.

Yours sincerely

Unity Health Partners