

News Release

30 October 2009

Chief Executive says Dorset County Hospital Trust is ready for the challenges ahead

Monitor, the independent regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts, announced today that Dorset County Hospital Trust is “failing to comply with its general duty to exercise its functions effectively, efficiently and economically.” Monitor has stressed that it has no reason for concerns as to the quality of the clinical care provided by the Trust to its patients.

Derek Smith, the new Chief Executive at the Hospital Trust, says he welcomes the involvement of Monitor and that his new team are ready to face up to and tackle the challenge set before them.

“Over the last 18 months the financial problems of the Trust have grown and action was not taken quickly enough to address these issues. We are now facing a deficit of up to £7.4 million this financial year,” said Derek Smith.

“Our new Executive team are working on a daily basis with Monitor and all our other health partners to put together a plan that will safeguard the long term future of hospital services in West Dorset and stabilise our finances.”

“The support of all our partners – our patients, staff, community, local media and all our health agency partners – will be important if we are to implement a really effective plan.

“Monitor makes clear in their statement that we need to ‘exercise our functions effectively, efficiently and economically.’ All those three words are important and cannot be separated. We need to be effective and efficient in the way we deliver services and we need to live within our means. I am pleased too that Monitor affirmed that it had no reason for concern as to the quality of clinical care provided by the Trust to its patients.”

“As much as we would all like to have everything we ask for, we all know that is unrealistic, particularly in the current economic climate. Our job is therefore to secure the maximum resources we can and then to make the best use of these and deliver the very best health services we can within the budget available.

“This may mean we are going to have some difficult decisions and choices to make, particularly in the short term. Clearly the Trust has been living beyond its means in the past 18 months and we need to bring our financial affairs back within financial balance.”

“Monitor has set us the task to ‘design and deliver a strategic plan that achieves longer term sustainability and financial stability’. We are ready to rise to the challenge of this task, for the long term benefit of everyone in Dorset.”

ENDS