

Confirmed

**Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday 2 December 2009
in the Committee Room, Bedford Hospital**

Present:

Ian Pickering	Non Executive Director (Chair)
Gordon Johns	Non Executive Director
Duncan Gear	Non Executive Director

In attendance:

Jean O'Callaghan	Chief Executive
Alan Warren	Director of Finance and Performance
Colin Ovington	Director of Nursing and patient services
Ed Neale	Medical Director
Sue Blackley	Deputy Director of Clinical Governance

1. **Apologies for absence:**
Mr K Lewis, Non Executive Director, Mr A Dickinson, Trust Board Secretary (Secretary)

2. **Declarations of Interest:**
There were no new declarations of interest

3. **Governance and Risk Issues:**

Standards for Better Health

3.1 **Identification of Significant lapses**

The Chairman stated that the committee recognised that after last year's declaration the trust had put in place an improved process within its governance systems for providing assurance to the Board including the new procedure whereby reports to the Trust Board now indicate the relevant standards and whether the issues under discussion represent a lapse. There have been no significant lapses reported to the Board in the period under consideration.

3.2 **Compliance Reports**

The Chairman requested assurance that all the Compliance Sign off sheets for each of the Core standards had now been completed and signed off by the relevant Executive.

The Director of Nursing and Patient Services confirmed that this was the case and that none of the sheets indicated any significant lapses. The situation was reinforced by a signed and dated sheet endorsing a statement from each executive to "confirm that for the time period under consideration there have been no significant lapses with this standard".

Confirmed

3.3 Governance Committee

The committee recognised that whilst the Governance Committee had overseen and reviewed the self assessment with compliance at mid year, given the run-in period to the time table for the declaration there was not a scheduled meeting of the Governance Committee at which it could sign off the Final Declaration. Given the size of the governance committee and clinical commitments of its membership it had not been practical to convene an additional Governance Committee meeting. The members agreed that in the circumstances it could recommend that the Board declare compliance with the Standards (other than Standard C4c due to the lack of a compliant decontamination facility) without a further meeting of the Governance Committee.

3.4 Self assessment Report

The Audit committee had noted the Self Assessment report submitted to them and asked for confirmation that the issues outlined had been reviewed and did not comprise a gap in evidence of assurance or constitute a significant lapse. The Director of Nursing and Patient Services confirmed that they had been reviewed and were items of information and none constituted a significant lapse.

3.5 Internal Audit report

The committee noted the receipt of the report from the Trust's Internal Auditors which had audited the evidence available to support a sample of standards and had given Substantial Assurance on the process used for the preparation of the declaration.

3.6 Conclusion

The Audit Committee members agreed that the committee could recommend to the Trust Board to declare that the Trust was compliant against the core standards where a declaration of compliance was required. Standard C4a related to healthcare infections and C4c decontamination facilities were covered by the registration of the trust with the CQC and declaration of compliance was not required for these standards.

It was noted that the Trust Board will be required to report to the CQC any significant lapses in the period up to the year end on 31 March 2010.