

The NHS Annual Health Check for South Warwickshire General Hospitals Trust: Contribution by the Patient and Public Involvement Forum South Warwickshire General Hospitals

This is the third year we have been invited to make comments on the Trust's performance seen from the perspective of the patients and the public. We have established a good working relationship with yet another Chief Executive and another Chair of the Trust Board. They would appear to have a much tighter rein on the finances and performance of the trust and are confidently talking about preparing for foundation status. It is not our intention this year to comment on every one of the core standards, some not being appropriate for the public to express a view and others where last year's comments would still apply.

Domain 1 - Safety

Core standard 4 - We now have six members of the Forum who have taken part in the hospital's infection control training so that we feel better equipped to carry out our cleanliness inspections. We have now inspected well over half of the wards at Warwick and Stratford, using our own proforma. After each inspection we feed back to the Hotel Services team and agree an action plan. We return a few weeks later to see if the action plan has been carried out. We have also started to carry out spotchecks. The hospital would appear to welcome our reports which are also sent to Warwickshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Our members are also part of the PEAT inspection team.

Domain 2 - Clinical and Cost Effectiveness

Core standard 8 Last year we welcomed the appointment of a discharge team but have been disappointed with the progress made in being able to discharge people into the community. An acute hospital is not an appropriate place for long term recovery and we would like to see the Trust having more say in the management of our community hospitals for the recuperation of patients.

Domain 4 - Patient Focus

Core standard 13 - This year we have carried out a project highlighting some of the problems people with learning difficulties have with their treatment in hospital. A group of young people with MLD presented our findings to a meeting of ward managers and would like to assist with more awareness raising, particularly for doctors and nurses.

We have been able to draw the attention of the Trust to the poor quality of the surroundings in the Bereavement Room in Maternity and the need to look again at the appropriateness of the present visiting hours.

Core standard 14 - The PALS Co-ordinator continues to be an invaluable liaison between the Forum and the trust. She ensures that all our concerns are channelled to the appropriate person and that we get a prompt reply

Core standard 15 - Forum members serve on the Eating Well in Hospital working group. Our proposal for a red tray scheme for those who need help with eating is being carried out. We were able to carry out an audit of its effectiveness. Our members have also been able to taste the hospital food during the recent PEAT inspection. Several of our members have recently been inpatients themselves and their biggest criticism of the catering was the lack of a cup of tea last thing at night. We would also like to see more prominent signs by each bed, alerting staff to cases of food allergies, deafness, dementia etc

Core standards 16 - We continue to edit the hospital's draft patient leaflets in an attempt to eliminate jargon or difficult terminology. A new problem is the need for information in different languages; locally we now have large communities of Poles and Portuguese. Interpreters are very expensive but a few translated leaflets would help.

Domain 5 - Accessible and responsive care

Core standard 17 - We are very pleased with a new initiative in partnership with the Trust. We run a bi-monthly public meeting to an audience of about 20 people representing different organizations in our community. The idea is to build a body of informed opinion in the community. Chaired by the Forum, each meeting has two topics - one where the Trust seeks the views of the public and one where the public wants to learn more about a particular service or specialism.

Also by using surveys and focus groups we have been able to compile reports to present to the Trust on a) young carers b) people with learning difficulties c) the elderly d) men.

Core standard 19 - We are very pleased that our A and E service remains after the recent Acute Services review. However, we believe it needs some tighter controls judging by some adverse reports we have received from patients and members of the public. We do recognize it is a difficult area of the hospital to manage with the added pressure of the Out of Hours Service located there.

Core standard 21. We have referred earlier to our work on cleanliness and we have certainly seen a marked improvement in the hospital

environment in the last three years. Where new facilities have been set up, such as the new Cardiac Catheter Lab, the new outpatients reception, etc the facilities are very good. However, much of the hospital is old and we appreciate that with financial difficulties it is difficult to raise environmental standards everywhere. We welcome and are looking forward to the development of the new Ambulatory Cancer Unit.