

**Visit Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**Service name:** Stroke Unit, Northwick Park Hospital

**Summary**

Healthwatch Brent made a visit to the Stroke Unit at Northwick Park Hospital to engage with patients and to hear their views on the service that they are receiving. The Stroke Unit has two wards, Herrick Ward and Haldane Ward. On the day of our visit we engaged with six patients and four carers at Herrick Ward. Herrick Ward has 25 beds with two male and two female bays, each bay occupies five beds and there are five side rooms. Patients who are referred to Herrick Ward have more complex conditions and will stay at the hospital for a longer period of time than the patients at Haldane Ward.

**Discussions:** Patients and carers feel involved with discussions around their care.

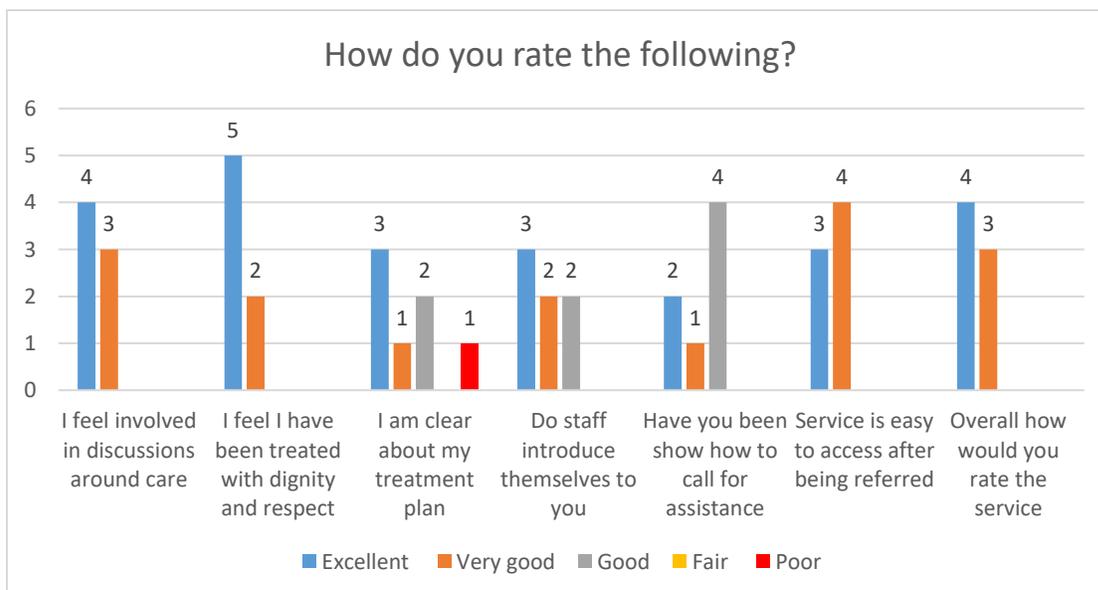
**Staff relationship:** Patients and carers feel they have been treated with dignity and respect. Some patients rely heavily on staff assistance. The staff help patients out of their beds to sit in the chair so they were not in their beds all day. They also help patients to go to the bathroom and with other day activities.

**Treatment plan:** The majority of patients and carers had an understanding of a treatment plan. One patient felt communication could have been better after they were told they would be discharged and several days later they had not been updated and had no information about when they would be discharged.

**Referral:** All patients we spoke to were referred to the Stroke Unit from Northwick Park Hospital. The majority of patients were referred straight from A&E and some were at a different ward before being moved to the Stroke Unit. All patients were transported in a trolley and Stoke Unit was expecting them.

**Call for assistance:** Most patients were aware how to call for assistance and those that had, said response time could vary but overall were quite quick. Some carers said the patient may have been told but wouldn't understand how to use the call button. They said staff are good at checking up on them and ask if everything is ok.

We asked the patients and carers to rate the service from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The results are in a graph below:



### **What patients and carers said:**

“The discussions have been very good, we have been explained everything and able to understand”

“Staff and nurses have been excellent”

“Since I arrived treatment and care have been excellent”

“I don’t feel rushed, staff take their time with me”

“My treatment has been outstanding”

“The ward are trying to help to arrange a social worker to help when discharged”

“Staff have phoned to give updates”

“Staff close the curtains for privacy when delivering care”

“Lack of communication, was told last week I might be able to home but now don’t know anything. Not received any information since and don’t know what will happen next”

“Not all staff introduce themselves and I don’t know what the different uniforms mean”

### **Overall experience:**

Overall patients and carers are happy with the service they have received at the Stroke Clinic and spoke highly of the staff. Staff give patients the time and attention they need. During our visit, there was a staff member sitting down with a patient and going through what looked to be a memory training session. There was a day room that looks underused, the TV was switched off, and the room appeared to be used to store items, mainly wheelchairs. When I was leaving, the day room was being used for a meeting. There was a quiet room that I saw being used for a staff meeting. The cleaning room cupboard was open and the lock looked to be broken.

### **Recommendations:**

- Pass on positive feedback to staff
- Post a summary of this report with trust response on the relative department public notice board in the form of 'you said, we did' documents
- Make better use of the day room for patients
- Replace the lock for the cleaning cupboard if broken

### **Service Response:**

Thank you for the wonderful feedback on the staff of the unit who are providing a great service despite significant pressures placed on them. We have also seen this reflected in the Friends & Family Test reports, informal feedback from patients and in staff on the unit being nominated by their colleagues for the Trust’s staff excellence awards.

Stroke has a huge effect on the lives of patients and their families and it is good to hear that patients feel involved in their treatment and this is done with dignity and respect. Communication between staff and patients about their medical plan has been identified previously by patients and their families. We operate a keyworker system for all stroke patients on the unit who should be available to inform and update patients on their treatment and discharge plans. We have also taken this feedback to the staff and reiterated the pathways of communication to ensure all patients have equal access to the information they require. Based on patient focus group feedback on improving communication, we have updated our ward booklet to utilise all forms of communication.

For stroke survivors communication and the ability to express their basic needs can be a challenge. All patients have a call bell available to them; however some patients struggle to use it. We are glad to hear that patients and their families felt that even though some patient could not use the bell, nurses were ensuring they were ok or needed any assistance.

Over the years the stroke unit has worked hard to ensure patients have access to stroke services and the admission process is as seamless as possible during a distressing time. It was encouraging that patients felt that this system was working well and they were welcomed on to the ward.

- **Pass on positive feedback to staff**

We have shared the results of the Healthwatch report with the staff and with senior management at the stroke board meetings.

- **Post a summary of this report with trust response on the relative department public notice board in the form of 'you said, we did' documents**

We have also updated the 'we said, you said' noticeboards based on your report and placed a copy of this report on the quality noticeboards.

- **Make better use of the day room for patients**

Developing a good environment for stroke rehabilitation by utilising the Herrick day room is an aim for the stroke unit. There have been challenges, such as storage issues of the wheelchairs that have affected the progress of the project. As a unit we are committed to developing a useable space in the day room for patient's and their families. We will be setting up a working party to develop short, medium and long term goals to help develop the day room. We have also been seeking feedback and ideas from patients through focus groups and suggestion boxes.

- **Replace the lock for the cleaning cupboard if broken**

This will be investigated and a new lock fitted if necessary.