

Visit Date: 27th July 2018.

Service name: Gaskell Ward, Northwick Park Hospital

Summary

Healthwatch Brent made a visit to Gaskell Ward Northwick Park Hospital to engage with patients and to hear their views on the service that they are receiving. Gaskell Ward is a respiratory service that treats patients with problems of the upper airway, the lungs and the chest wall. Gaskell Ward has a total of 28 beds: four bays with six beds in each and four single side rooms. On the day of our visit we engaged with eight patients and one carer.

Discussions around care: Patients had regular discussions with staff about their condition and felt involved in discussions around their care.

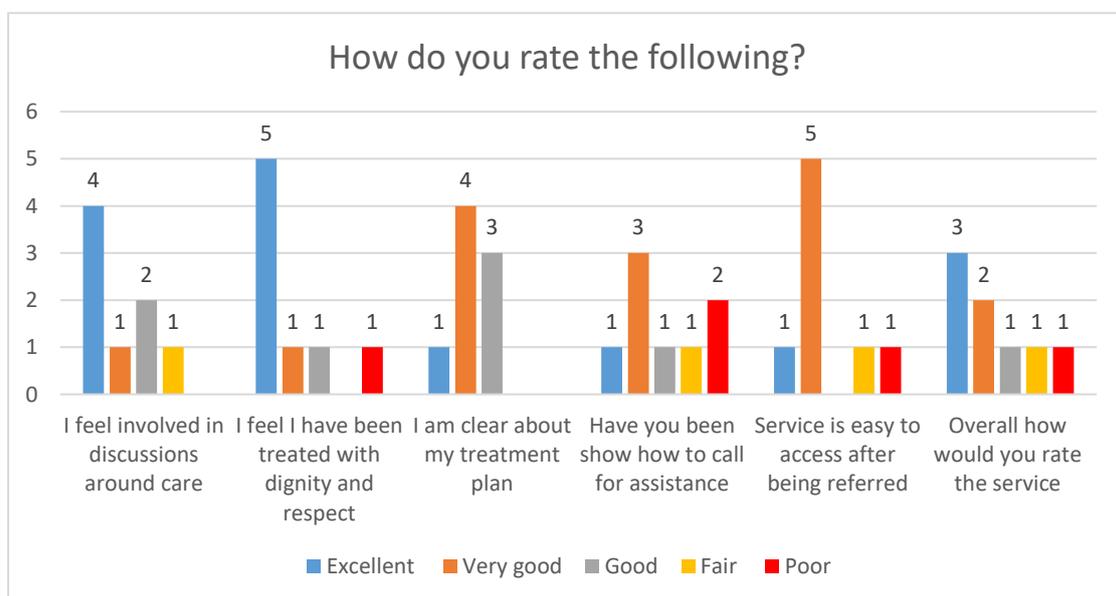
Staff relationships: There were mixed experiences of relationships between the staff and patients. Patients felt that the day staff were friendlier than the night staff and a lot quicker to respond. Some patients relied on the staff to help them go toilet and to help them out of bed and to sit in a chair, this way they are not in their bed all day.

Treatment plan: Patients understood their treatment plan and were kept up to date with any progress and any changes to their conditions.

Referrals: All patients were referred to Gaskell Ward by A&E. Some patients waited in a holding room, before being transferred to the ward.

Call for assistance: Three patients were not shown how to call for assistance. During the day it was rare for a patient to have to use the call button as staff were always around and it was easy to get their attention. Patients reported that night staff were poor at responding to calls for assistance.

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 said

Below are some of the comments we received from patients during our visit to the ward:

- “Nurses are absolutely brilliant, every one of them. Very caring and don’t get the recognition they deserve”
- “I have a good relationship with staff”
- “Always someone around and easy to get their attention”
- “Staff help me to go to the toilet and out of the bed so I can sit on the chair”

- “If wasn’t for night staff I would say that everything is very good so I will give a fair”
- “Would be nice if staff asked how you are feeling and said hello in the mornings, they only talk to you when giving treatment”
- “Day staff are very good, night staff are awful”
- “I have understood everything that has been explained to me perfectly clear”
- “One nurse brought me to Gaskell Ward on a wheelchair and was pulling me backwards, it felt quite undignifying”
- “I asked for a cup of tea but was told only at certain times”
- “Was left waiting on a bed in a corridor for several hours at A&E”
- “Ward feels depressing, nothing to do and rooms look dull”

Case studies:

Long waiting times

One patient we spoke with had had an x-ray organised while they were a patient at Gaskell Ward. After the X-ray they were left waiting for five hours to be brought back to the ward.

Poor experience with night staff

One patient described a time when they experienced poor care from the night staff on the ward. The patient had called for assistance as they needed to go toilet. The staff member came to the patient and switched the call off then left the room, the patient called again and the staff member switched the call off and said they would be back. The patient called for a third time one hour later, at which point they were not happy. When they asked the staff why they kept turning the call off and leaving, the staff member denied this had happened and told the patient they were dreaming. The patient waited until the morning for the day staff to help them go toilet. One of the other patients on the ward reported they had also seen this happen.

Another patient described a situation, which they felt would have never happened with day staff. They reported they had gotten blood on their sheets and asked if the sheet could be changed, they first asked just after 8pm. The patient had to ask several times throughout the night for the sheets to be changed. The sheets were eventually changed around 11pm at night.

Good staff response

A patient we spoke with reported a good experience with the staff on the ward. The patient had an incident where they had fallen out of their bed and injured themselves. They said the staff responded really well when the incident happened and helped him to recover in the long term. The patient really appreciated the response from the staff and said they are looking into how this happened.

Overall experience:

Patients had mixed experiences of throughout treatment. Day staff received positive comments and were appreciated, but the patients felt the service overall was being let down by night staff.

Other things we noticed during our visit was the day room, which looked under used. There were no patients or carers in the room when we visited, both of the TVs were switched off and the majority of the chairs were stacked on top of each other.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that patients are aware that the night staff are just outside their rooms and cannot sit in their rooms as the lights need to be switched off.
- Have better communication between clinics so patients are not left for several hours after receiving treatment at a different clinic.
- Give patients an option to be pushed or pulled whilst in the wheelchair, but ensure the decision is explained to them.
- Make better use of the day room and offer patients the opportunity use it to talk to other patients if they would like and a chance to get away from their beds for a change of scenery and to watch TV.

Service Response:

Thank you for this helpful feedback.

We were sorry to learn of the reports that the care provided by the night staff was poor. Whilst some staff do prefer to work night shifts, and may work more night shifts than day shifts, we do not have nurses on a permanent pattern of night duty, and expect staff to rotate to day shifts regularly to assist with communication, supervision and development. It is our expectation that patients receive a high standard of care at all times, and that our staff provide this in a polite, responsive, caring and professional manner. These expectations are reinforced to staff throughout the Trust and any reports that staff have not behaved in a polite or acceptable manner are taken seriously and addressed with the staff member concerned. As a result of this feedback, in which individual staff members have not been identified, the team on Gaskell ward have been reminded of the Trust values and our expectations in relation to behaviour and attitude.

- **Ensure that patients are aware that the night staff are just outside their rooms and cannot sit in their rooms as the lights need to be switched off.**

Staff have been encouraged to take a few minutes before they start their medication rounds and observation rounds, to speak to their patients individually wherever possible, as the night activities are too short before patients settle for bed. At handover takeover time, nursing staff have been reminded to ensure that they show each individual patient how to use the call bell system.

- **Have better communication between clinics so patients are not left for several hours after receiving treatment at a different clinic.**

This is not our usual practice and should not have happened. We have a clear pathway for portering response times. This report has been shared with staff and they have been reminded to ensure that follow up is made when patients have been off the ward for a considerable amount of time.

- **Give patients an option to be pushed or pulled whilst in the wheelchair, but ensure the decision is explained to them.**

All patients should be pushed and not pulled when being transported in a wheelchair. This is for safety reasons and also to ensure that we are properly engaging with our patients. All porters and patient transport staff are instructed and monitored by their supervisory teams about this.

- **Make better use of the day room and offer patients the opportunity to use it to talk to other patients if they would like and a chance to get away from their beds for a change of scenery and to watch TV.**

Staff have been reminded to encourage patients and relatives to use the day room.