

Visit Date: 30th June 2017. **Time:** 1pm – 3pm
Service name: Dowland Ward, Northwick Park Hospital

Summary

Healthwatch Brent made a visit to Dowland Ward at Northwick Park Hospital to engage with patients and to hear their views on the service that they are receiving. On the day, I was joined by Huzaima who is the Patient Experience Assistant. The ward manager, Afua, introduced us to patients. There are 16 beds on the ward and currently there are 12 patients occupying the beds. We spoke to six patients and two carers. One patient had only just arrived at the ward.

Access to Dowland Ward: Two carers and I struggled to find the ward from main entrance.

Discussions: Patients feel involved with discussions about their care.

Staff relationship: Patients feel they have a good relationship with the staff; staff were described as helpful, kind and understanding. However, they often are available during the day but hard to contact them at night.

Treatment plan: Patients are aware of their treatment plan. One patient was being discharged and knew that they would have an appointment in two weeks to follow up with their recovery. Patients generally feel that they are informed step by step of their treatment plan and they are able to ask staff questions if needed.

Referral: Patients were referred from different departments at Northwick Park Hospital. Three patients were brought in from A&E, one patient from Urology and two patients from other services. Patients said the transition from and to the ward was an easy process for them. All arrangements were made for them and they were brought to Dowland Ward on an operation bed.

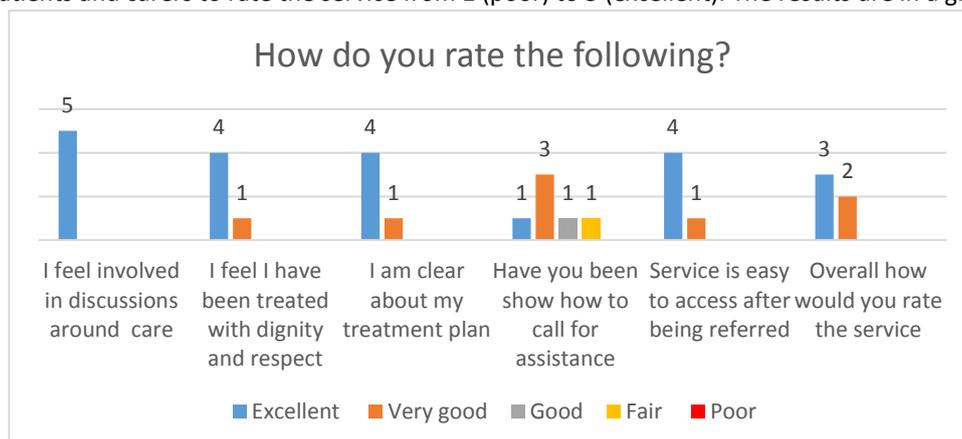
Call for assistance: Patients say that there is a button they press that will call for assistance. Some patients have not yet had to use the button. A carer reported that they had to let staff know that the button was not plugged in and on another visit the button was not there at all. A patient needed help to go toilet at night and called for assistance but no one responded, the patient could no longer wait and had to go toilet whilst still in the bed. After they did not call for assistance again and waited until the morning staff came in to clean them and change the sheets.

Access: Carers found the ward very hard to find on their first visit. Carers said there were no signs from main reception to Dowland Ward.

Patients’ feedback:

- “After operation, [staff are] very kind and understanding”
- “I [was] kept well informed with my progress”
- “Have a good relationship with staff”
- “Ward looks run down and in need of a refurbishment”
- “Ward very hard to find”
- “No signs showing where the ward is”

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



Recommendations

- To explore ways that enable and ensure night staff to respond more quickly to patients when they call for assistance and that there is always a call button available whilst plugged in.
- To introduce a better signage from main reception to Dowland Ward, for an easy and quick access.
- To consider refurbishing the ward looks especially their bathrooms.

Overall experience

There seems to be a mixed experience of staff at the Dowland Ward. Patients generally speak highly of the relationship that they have with staff, which often makes their stay at the ward a pleasant one. Patients also say that night staff are less responsive than day staff. Night staff need to respond to patients who call for assistance to prevent a repeat of the patient who needed to use the bathroom.

Service response

Thank you for this helpful visit and feedback. We were pleased to see that patients felt involved in their care and were treated with dignity and respect.

The ward was indeed in need of refurbishment at the time of the visit. The bathrooms are being decorated and the ward re-painted in August.

We were sorry to hear that patients were not always able to get the attention of staff especially at night, and that call bells were not always available. The matron investigated the example that was raised and is confident that this is not the usual experience on the ward. That said, the matron and ward manager are monitoring this carefully.

A Sister will be allocated on to night duty on some shifts to monitor standards of nursing care. The Clinical Ward Manager checks in with patients every morning to ensure that there are no concerns.

The matron now undertakes weekly audits using a 'perfect ward app' which checks on a range of measures of quality, safety and patient experience, including the accessibility of call bells. Since the visit in June, there have been no similar reports.

It is difficult to find Dowland Ward. Following your visit, we created a set of easy to follow directions. These are available on the ward so that visitors can share them with other people who plan to come and at the main reception. Staff also have copies on the ward so they can give directions by phone.

The Trust is aware that signage needs to be improved and is in discussions with a wayfinding consultant and is exploring technological solutions. Meanwhile there is a team of wayfinding volunteers to help guide visitors to their destinations.