

Ward 4 Harplands Hospital, North Staffs Combined Healthcare Trust

Date of Monitoring visit 21st January 2020

Place Visited Ward 4

Harplands Hospital
Hilton Road,
Stoke-on-Trent,
Staffordshire,
ST4 6RR

Ward Manager Richard Bagnall. It should be noted that, on the day of the visit, Mr. Bagnall was on annual leave. Instead, we were introduced to Tom Sandford, the Deputy Manager. Mr. Sandford was courteous and made the time to answer all our questions.

Authorised Representatives: Dave Rushton and Laura Johnson

Representatives have undertaken Enter and View Training and are enhanced DBS checked.

Purpose of the visit: part of the program of ongoing program of visits to health and care facilities across the city and also to allow our visit team to see what changes and progress have been made since last visited.

Date of visit: 21st January 2020

Service provider: North Staffs Combined Healthcare Trust (NSCHT)

Type of facility: Ward 4 receives patients from the Royal Stoke University Hospital (RSUH) by referral. Patients are of mixed sex, are normally older (65+) and may have dementia. Length of stay can vary but is normally up to four weeks (28 days) before discharge.

General

Access to the ward is via a pleasantly decorated wide corridor with a great deal of natural light. Access to the ward can only be gained by buzzing in and waiting for a member of staff to let visitors in.

The ward itself consists of a pleasant lounge area with access to the outside garden, a dining room as well as two smaller public rooms which can be used for smaller, family meetings or as a quiet room when required. One of these smaller rooms was decorated with a large wall to wall décor panel to give the impression of the outside world, which our team thought was a sensitive touch. We observed Activity boxes in two of the smaller lounges, containing paper, card and crayons. The garden area itself deserves mention - ample seating is provided throughout this reasonably large and easily accessible garden area.

It has fifteen beds, all of which are situated off 'colour coded' corridors designating the sex of the patients (2 corridors are designated for female patients and one for males). Doors have been installed which, due to their design, give a sense of 'homeliness' to patient rooms. There is a total of 14 rooms, plus one larger en-suite room. Handrails were noted throughout and the whole ward was pleasantly decorated and clean.

There are separate toilet/bathroom areas at the end of each of the corridors which lead off the end of the more 'public' areas.

Staffing

We asked about shifts and staffing levels. There are three shifts and they are staffed as follows:

Shift	Qualified nurses	Healthcare workers	Total staff
Days	2	4	6
Nights	1	3	4

There are two social workers who can very quickly attend on the ward when required. One works for Staffordshire County Council and the other for the City of Stoke-on-Trent. Their role is to arrange suitable ongoing care when a patient is awaiting discharge and to ensure that the patient and/or their family/carers understand the arrangements fully.

Activities

We asked about activities on the ward. A hairdresser visits the ward once each week and has her own mini 'salon' which we were informed proved a popular activity. We were told there were two Activity workers on the ward although at the time of our visit, we saw no organised activity. We did see the activity schedule and noted that it included bowling, Arts and Crafts, Music, Singing Films as well as 'Outings'.

When we asked the Deputy Ward Manager about this, he told us that there had recently been a trip to the Spode factory in Stoke.

Reading other notices on the walls of the ward, we noted that there was a regular Christian religious service and we enquired about catering for other religions. We were told that 'it had never been a problem', largely due to the intake of patients, but we were assured that this was something which would be considered for the future.

Refreshments

We asked about the availability of drinks for patients and observed that in the dining room there was a drinks trolley. We were told that drinks were available to patients at all times and staff made sure that the trolley was kept stocked.

Catering

Menus were clearly displayed on the wall immediately outside the dining room with all the meals for the day displayed (both lunch and dinner, on separate sheets). We noted that for both lunch and the evening meal there were 3 choices of hot food and two of cold for the main course, as well as three alternatives for the sweet (again 2 hot and one cold). All meals are prepared on site.

We were told that, if required, different menus could also be catered for, including vegetarian and vegan.

Conversations with patients and staff

We spoke to one patient who informed us that her stay on ward 4 had been 'marvellous' and she would miss the care shown by the staff. She told us she was due to be transferred to a care home nearer to where she lived on the next day.

It was difficult to converse with other patients as several displayed symptoms of a more advanced dementia. We did notice that all patients were clean and well dressed, indicating a good level of care.

Two staff members told us separately that they enjoyed working on the ward - in fact one care worker had, for a time, moved away but was 'overjoyed' when she could return to the ward.

Summary and recommendations

At the end of the visit, we spent a short time talking with Mr. Sandford, telling him it had been a successful visit and that we found very little to mention that was of concern.

However, during our visit, while we had seen many notices and signs displayed on the walls throughout, we saw nothing regarding 'how to make a complaint' or how to use the PALS service, which we considered to be an oversight. Mr. Sandford acknowledged this and excused himself for a short while. Upon his return, he showed us one or two leaflets which were included in the Admissions Pack when a new patient was admitted.

It is our thought that, although the ward seems to be exceedingly well run and caring, it would be appropriate to clearly indicate to new arrivals (or their family/carers) that a complaints procedure is in place and, furthermore, indicate how to use it.

This one area for improvement aside, we must compliment the way in which the ward is run and, in particular, thank Mr. Sandford for his helpfulness throughout the visit.