



Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust and Surrey County Council Adult Social Care

LEVEL 3
Seven day service provision within an organisation

Social care presence on the acute medical unit, seven days a week, improves discharges from hospital

Overview

Building on the success of co-locating Social Care on the acute medical unit seven days a week at Epsom Hospital, the model has now been spread across Surrey County. Since October 2012, the number of days where patients have been delayed in hospital waiting for Social Care support has fallen by 50%. Between October 2012 and August 2013, 17% of Surrey Social Care supported discharges have taken place during an evening or weekend, and this figure continues to grow.

Epsom Hospital has a 56 bedded acute medical unit (AMU) across two wards with 16 assessment beds and 40 short stay beds designed for patient hospital stays of up to 72 hours. The social care team has been co-located within the assessment unit and take a lead role in daily meetings to facilitate discharge.

- The unit is supported by a team of four acute physicians who work directly on the unit providing senior consultant reviews to all patients every day. The AMU receives all admissions to the hospital, apart from people needing treatment for Stroke. After patients are admitted, they are assessed in the AMU to determine their treatment plan. If a patient needs to stay in the hospital for a long time, they are transferred to a speciality ward. However, if the patient only needs to be in hospital for a short period (up to 72 hours), they will be moved to one of the short stay beds on the AMU and discharged home when fit.
- With the social care team located on the AMU, a new multidisciplinary team approach was developed to manage the discharge process from the point of admission to hospital.
- Senior members of the team meet every day at noon to discuss new admissions and the progress of patients already on the ward.
- The multidisciplinary meetings produce actions with accountable individuals and timeframes. Everyone is clear about who is doing what and when, which helps to ensure that things really get done. It has also created a team environment where all disciplines can collaboratively work together.

Spread of this model was achieved by:

- Engagement events during 2011, which revealed a demand for more accessible hospital services across the whole County during evenings and weekends
- Surrey County Council's 'one team' approach with partners to improve services, which recognised that expanded Social Care services would help reduce pressure on hospital beds
- Establishment of a project group to implement the new service across all five acute hospital sites
- Taking a co-design approach to engage staff and enhance staff trust, sharing success stories, and giving staff opportunity to voice their views and concerns, (including involving Trade Unions representatives)
- Inviting all of the teams to visit Epsom to show how it can be done
- Developing a 'bank' of staff for each acute hospital team to help cover shifts when necessary - these staff are Social Care staff who usually work in community teams
- Including hospital team cover within the senior management on call rota to support staff working shift hours.

Impact

Patients

The approach centres on early assessment, which allows the team to focus on individuals who need support with care, while being assured that those who don't need that support have been properly assessed. This means that:

- There is the best possible outcome for each person, taking into account the views of their family and carers
- People do not remain in hospital longer than they need to; they return home at the appropriate time, with social care support in place if needed, and at a time that is convenient to them. Social care and staff are also available to talk to families and carers at a time more convenient to them
- Decisions are made by the right people at the right time, leading to a reduction of delays.

Overall system

- Since October 2012, the number of days where patients have been delayed in hospital waiting for Social Care support has fallen by 50%
- Between October 2012 to March 2013 360 avoidable admissions were prevented at the weekend or weekday evening, 43% of the total number
- Since April 2013, complaints in relation to support hospital discharges have fallen, an 80% reduction when compared with figures for the same period last year
- Between October 2012 and August 2013, 17% of Surrey Social Care supported discharges have taken place during an evening or weekend and this figure continues to grow
- Less time spent on bureaucracy and more time for people - lengthy referrals no longer used, freeing up the time of health and social care professionals
- Co-location – social care staff are visible and accessible to health staff, family members and carers. An 'open door' policy has been created, enabling better communication and more person focused, effective service delivery
- Changing the process to improve quality – discharge decisions are now based on the latest clinical assessment, preventing raised expectations of discharge, which do not come to fruition. It also saves time if social

care support is organised but not needed

- A culture of professional respect and trust

Challenges and solutions

Historic barriers between health and social care services and general resistance to change have been overcome through resilience to opposition and total communication and belief in the project.

Emerging themes and principles

- This improvement work has only been possible after lengthy open, honest and sometimes difficult conversations between health and social care
- A tangible improvement in quality for patients, deriving from the positive staff relationships at the AMU, can be seen in the change in referral pathways

TOP TIPS

- Remove barriers and blame culture between health and social care
- Open and honest relationships and leadership are vital
- Set the ground rules from the outset
- 'White board meetings' must happen on a daily basis
- Mutual trust and respect are key – one team approach

Contact

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