

PLACE 2013.

Introduction

All NHS Hospital Trusts are required to carry out an annual audit of their hospital environments called PLACE (Patient Led Assessments of the Care Environment). PLACE has superseded the previous hospital environment audit called PEAT (Patient Environment Action Team).

The key change between PEAT and PLACE was to increase the number of patient assessors on the audit team so that they now make up half of the audit group. There should always be at least two patient assessors, even in smaller sub-teams, whereas previously it was generally a single patient assessor working with the Trust staff. The exact number of assessors required depends on how the Trust wants to organise the assessment – for example whether or not they want several smaller teams or one large one. Hospitals involved in the pilot assessments generally found it easier to split into smaller teams, each checking two or three wards or departments (as we did at BSUH). This also allows the use of a wider range of patient assessors, including those who might not be physically fit enough to assess a whole site.

The term patient assessor covers all people whose experience of the hospital is as a user rather than a provider. It encompasses relatives, carers, friends, patient advocates, and volunteers. The local Healthwatch and HOSC members were also invited to participate although some of the dates of the audits that BSUH were given did not coincide with the availability of some members. The PLACE audit teams at BSUH are divided equally according to the size of the hospital/unit being audited.

The Assessment

The PLACE assessment falls into four broad categories:

- How clean the hospital environment is;
- Buildings and facilities - inside and outside of the building, fixtures and fittings, signage and car parking;
- Food and Hydration, the quality and availability of food and drinks; (the meal service to patients is observed and the assessors have an opportunity to taste the food);
- Privacy and Dignity, how well the environment supports this;

Final decisions on which wards or areas of the hospital are to be assessed are not made until the day of the assessment. They are a joint decision by the assessment team, although the hospital staff have an important role to play in ensuring that the wards or areas chosen are reflective of the range of services and, where appropriate, the buildings and wings that make up the hospital. In each year, different areas should be selected (with the exception of A&E) so that over a period all areas of the hospital are assessed.

Scoring

PLACE is not a patient survey. PLACE assessors are required, as a team, to reach joint decisions based on what they see on the day of the assessment. In certain circumstances (for example

ascertaining whether an individual received the meal they ordered) then they can speak to the patients. Assessors gather information on their findings following a clearly defined checklist.

To achieve a pass, all aspects of all items must meet the definition/guidance as set out in the assessment form. There is no margin whereby an item can fail to meet the required standard and still pass.

The scores should be agreed by each team as the team walk round each area. Final scores should be agreed at the conclusion of the assessment of that ward/department before moving on to the next. Once the whole of the site has been audited, all of the patient assessors (Trust staff are not included) meet to complete a final summary sheet which should accurately reflect the hospital as a whole.

The results of the assessments are shared with the Care Quality Commission, who will use the information in their monitoring of provider compliance with the essential standards of quality and safety, and to inform inspection of relevant standards. Other organisations such as the NHS Commissioning Board and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence may also use the data in support of their own objectives. The results also enable us as a Trust to identify what we are doing right and improve on things that we are not.

The Assessments

PLACE assessments took place between April and July 2013. The results for BSUH and how they compare with the national average is set out in the following table.

BRIGHTON AND SUSSEX UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS TRUST

Hospital	Cleanliness	Food/Hydration	Privacy/Dignity	Cond/Appearance
Hurstwood Park	99.82%	87.82%	80.63%	94.31%
Royal Alexandra Childrens Hospital	95.52%	87.27%	97.25%	92.51%
Princess Royal Hospital	99.41%	87.93%	91.03%	94.86%
Sussex Eye Hospital	97.80%	89.09%	80.12%	83.94%
Royal Sussex County Hospital	97.00%	83.52%	86.78%	80.81%
Sussex Orthopaedic Centre	100%	89.62%	86.84%	92.17%
National Average	95.74%	84.98%	88.87%	88.75%

BSUH scores were mostly better than average in cleanliness and food/hydration, but in several of the Trust's older buildings which are earmarked for refurbishment or redevelopment the

privacy/dignity and condition/appearance scores were lower than average. The detailed PLACE reports for the areas audited have been shared with the Clinical teams, Infection Control, Estates and the Trust's external soft FM services provider (Sodexo). The reports have been used to identify and rectify specific issues in patient catering, cleaning and the environment. Some long standing environmental issues which are impacting on the privacy and dignity scores in particular in the Barry Building and Sussex Eye Hospital at RSCH and at Hurstwood Park are such things as spacing between beds, large enough reception areas in departments, sufficient space at reception desks so that conversations cannot be overheard, and also patients leaving consulting rooms without having to return through the general waiting area. This is all dependent on Trust's 3Ts redevelopment programme to achieve a permanent solution.

Our Estates team continues to maintain the buildings within the Trust. The Estates and Facilities department along with our Infection Control and Risk Management teams have recently undertaken an audit on problematic floor areas and have risk rated them, prioritising the work to be carried out.

Food and Hydration were rated slightly below average at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. Meetings have already taken place with the dietetic team to review menus and service standards of meals to our patients. Patient satisfaction surveys in relation to food are also undertaken with the patients on a weekly basis to gain feedback.

The Trust liaises daily with Sodexo (the service provider), and holds weekly operational meetings to discuss any concerns and how they will be resolved. The Trust in conjunction with Sodexo undertakes mini PLACE audits in each area regularly to identify any non conformities which can be rectified as soon as possible.

The patient assessors who conducted this year's assessments will be invited back towards the end of November 2013 to re-visit the areas that they assessed to see if they consider that improvements have been made.

PLACE 2014

Healthwatch and HOSC assessors will also be invited to attend an initial planning meeting with the Trust early next year (date to be confirmed) to commence planning the 2014 PLACE audits. The Trust's PLACE lead is Karon Goodman, Facilities Compliance Manager.

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