

Press release

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Improving Patient Care

Nine out of ten patients at the Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust (RUH) rated their care as good or better in the most recent inpatient survey published today.

The survey, which was carried out for the trust by the Picker Institute, relates to patients discharged from the RUH in June, July and August 2006. A total of 850 patients were sent the survey to complete of which 505 (60.9%) were returned, which is above the national average.

Francesca Thompson, director of nursing at the RUH says: "Patient surveys are just one of the many ways that we encourage patients to tell us what they think about the care that we provide. Positive feedback is a great boost to our hard working staff. We do however welcome all feedback as this helps us to review and improve our services and meet the needs of patients and their relatives.

"Overall we are pleased that the majority of those who responded to the 2006 inpatient survey had trust and confidence in our doctors and nurses treating them and believed that we care for our patients with dignity and respect. For the second year running patients also highly rated how quickly and effectively we controlled their pain at the RUH.

"Areas of the survey where the RUH has significantly improved compared with last year included fewer patients saying that they should have been admitted sooner for a planned operation and also fewer receiving care in a mixed female and male environment.

"Areas where our patients say they would like to see change and where the trust has already identified priorities for improvement include; reducing the length of time patients sometimes have to wait to get to a bed on a ward and providing more privacy when discussing a patient's condition or treatment."

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“As part of a major campaign to tackle infection, since the survey was carried out, we have also made significant progress in ensuring higher levels of hand hygiene compliance amongst doctors and nurses and levels of cleanliness around the hospital. We have invested in the recruitment and training of our cleaning staff and an intensive rolling programme of deep cleaning to all our wards.

“We are also working hard to improve the way that we manage patients leaving hospital as more patients than we would have liked experienced delays, were waiting for medicines or wanted better information about their medication.

“One of the limitations of an annual national survey is that it only shows a snapshot of care at a particular time. As part of a new initiative at the RUH senior nurses will be interviewing a significant number of patients as they leave the hospital, asking many of the same questions as the annual survey so that we can gain a better understanding throughout the year of how they rate their care and where we are improving.

“Nationally patients in the survey said that they were rarely asked to give their views about the quality of their care or how to complain. This is another area that the RUH has already identified for action and started to make progress. As part of our aim of putting patients at the heart of everything we do, we are launching a new ‘Strategy for Improving Patient Experience’ which focuses on listening and responding to patient views. The strategy will help us ensure that patient feedback is systematically used to inspire and encourage quality initiatives and service improvements across the RUH.”

Ends

The full survey results can be found at:

www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/nationalfindings/surveys/patientsurveys/nhspatient/survey2006

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