

Delivering Same Sex Accommodation Assurance Statement

November 2009

Introduction

The board has been made aware of the ongoing work to implement and embed the new standards on same sex accommodation. The new standards must be achieved by April 2010.

Many wards received new building improvements to the toilet and, or wash facilities which are available to the multi-bedded bays, between April and the end of June 2009. This was funded using national privacy and dignity funds, from which the trust made a bid and received £490k. Signage on toilets and wash rooms has been modernised in patient areas and wards across the whole trust.

There will be reporting requirements from the 1st of January to the PCT on any decisions to mix sexes; this process is currently being implemented in advance of January within the trust to ensure that the systems function in the desired way.

Current Status

There have been only a few cases of decisions to mix the sexes since building work was completed. In these circumstances consent from all patients is sought and in all circumstances the mixing was a result of clinical requirement for patients to be nursed in a particular area. This is rare and is being monitored closely.

Public communication

1. Trust internet site with a privacy and dignity page
2. Patient information leaflet available in eleven languages
3. Notices on ward doors
4. Action plan on the public web site, updated fortnightly and shared with the PCT

Leadership and Governance

This policy agenda is led by the Director of Nursing & Patient Services, and monitoring of the policy and decisions to mix the sexes will be undertaken at the Improving the Patient Experience Committee which meets on a monthly basis. All instances of decisions to mix the sexes will be reported to the Director of Nursing & Patient Services.

Assurance

The trusts plans and actions taken have been tested by the executive team on their safety walkabouts during which signage on toilets and washrooms was monitored and recorded. This provided good evidence for the latest inspection by the PCT. NHS East of England and the PCT have made a number of inspections. The latest inspection was an announce visit made by the PCT Quality Monitoring Manager and

a PCT Non Executive Director. All of these visits have demonstrated excellent progress and feedback comments from the last visit include,

“It was evident that progress has been made at all levels , not just in the physical environment , but in the awareness the staff had and the pride in displaying your intentions to the public with posters and leaflets.

I was struck with the positive attitude of all the staff who I spoke to but was particular reassured by the staff on Victoria ward including the new student nurse, that the DSSA agenda was understood and embedded.”

The next visit will be an unannounced visit from NHS East of England in conjunction with the PCT.

Tavistock day case ward and our patient information leaflet have been highlighted as best practice. A number of trusts have accessed our leaflet to share our practice. Our communications team have presented our progress on DSSA at an SHA communications event in October 2009.

We have planned three additional patient surveys, the first one will be undertaken during November and the final two before March 2010 to ensure that we are checking the patients experience and perception of same sex accommodation at our hospital. These will be reported via the Improving the Patient Experience Committee.

Service Specific

The rules governing same sex accommodation are slightly different for children in whom it is felt to be more important for age groups to be nursed together. However we have made arrangements for both age groups and for sexes to be segregated as best fits with the needs of children and their parents. This is working well and there have been no decisions to mix the sexes which are outside the standards.

Conclusion

The hospital plans which have been implemented are coterminous with national standards, have been tested externally and are continuously monitored. Our patients and the board can be assured that we are adherent to the standard and in some areas have best practice which is being shared with other NHS organisations.

Colin Ovington
Director of Nursing & Patient Services
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