

Healthwatch Cheshire West Enter and View Report - NHS

Enter and View Visit to	Ward 46, Ambulatory Care Unit. Countess of Chester Hospital.
Date	26 th May 2015
Authorised Representatives	Pamela Fox, Andrew Firman and Margaret McDermott
Staff Present	Lisa Hartley, Ward Manager.
Background	<p>The Ambulatory Care Unit (ACU) is situated on the ground floor and has been open for two years. It is an evolving project aimed at avoiding hospital admissions and alleviating pressure on the Accident and Emergency Dept. The function of this unit is to diagnose and treat patients who are likely to return home the same day.</p> <p>GPs make referrals via the hospital's 'single point of access' and a decision is made whether the patient should attend Accident and Emergency (A&E) or the Acute Care Unit (ACU) using a scoring system. No infectious cases are taken.</p> <p>GPs in Wales refer directly to the admin staff in the bed bureau where a judgement is made about the patient's admission. The bed bureau is situated in ACU.</p> <p>The unit also carries out day treatments e.g. Ascites drainage; thus relieving the pressure on admitting patients to a surgical ward.</p> <p>Lisa told us that there were approximately eight ACU units in the country and senior staff meet annually for discussion.</p> <p>The unit continues to grow since its inception and now is open six days a week from 9am until 10pm. (Sat. 10am until 6 pm) - closed on a Sunday. They may open on a Bank Holiday if GP cover is available.</p>
Overall Impression	The overall feeling as you entered the ward was of a well-staffed unit providing a useful facility with the intention of returning the patients home on the same day. The whole operation is smooth with good co-ordination with all departments; all test results being given on the day of admission. We observed a calm and efficient department.
Any ideas or suggestions for improving service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We were told by the bed bureau staff, that in their decision-making, the need was for greater capacity for care in the community including the hospital at home service, social care at home and overcoming some barriers in the community to speed discharge and enable a better service to be given to those who need hospital admission. They commented, "<i>Commissioners would do well to take evidence for this into account.</i>" A consultant on the ward suggested that there would be advantage in expanding the day ward capacity to allow more patients to be dealt with on the day. Improved diagnostic availability at the weekends would enable cases to be progressed more speedily. Lisa (Ward Manager) stated that, "<i>Often it was difficult to retrieve patients notes, the ward clerks have to get approx. 30 sets of notes daily, this involves the ward clerk leaving the ward and going to medical records. Help with this task would be advantageous.</i>" When asked if the ward was fully equipped Lisa told us that, "<i>Ward 46 needed one more *Dina-Map.*</i>" (<i>*VITAL SIGNS MONITOR</i>) Lisa also stated that she would welcome volunteer help for the drinks trolley and also at mealtime's. Representatives feel that an information board about the staff with their photographs and roles would be helpful and informative for the patients.

Welcoming

On our arrival we were greeted by Lisa Hartley (Ward Manager and Advanced Nurse Practitioner), she gave the Authorised Representatives a very helpful and comprehensive tour of the ward. Conversations with her inspired confidence and Representatives were impressed by her open and positive approach - she was clearly committed to and proud of the service that the ward provides.

The ward had a spacious entrance and work station where presenting patients are welcomed and triaged; it appeared that investigations are done immediately (e.g. CT scans, U/S, MRI scan, bloods etc.). Results in most cases are given the same day.

Information about the unit, infection control and staff uniforms was situated outside the ward entrance, also leaflets - 'A patients guide to the Ambulatory Care Unit', 'Patient experience questionnaire' and information about complaints (PALS) were available. Lisa told us that these leaflets were being up-dated.

Safety

The ward environment is light, airy, clean and well maintained. All toilet facilities were clean and we did not observe any clutter or untidiness.

Patients with known infection are not admitted to the ACU. There is one isolation bed available for those arriving with an infectious condition.

No hot meals are served on the ward, patients have soup, sandwiches and drinks. This aside Lisa said, "*In exceptional circumstances a hot meal can be organised.*"

Caring and Involving

Lisa told us that staffing levels were sufficient and the ward was fully staffed. As ward manager she works five days a week. In addition there are two more advanced nurse practitioners (ANP) and two health-care assistants staffing the ward. They work on a three day, two off basis. Care on the ward is consultant (medical and surgical) led together with a GP.

A dedicated pharmacist based on the adjacent ward provides pharmacy services. Physiotherapy cover is also present.

Two ward clerks work on the unit. They are very busy and Lisa felt that maybe some help to retrieve the patients' notes would ease the pressure put upon them.

Well organised and calm

The unit is divided into bays;

A bay - This is a five bedded assessment area. Leading off this bay is a frailty unit . A team of two consultants, two nurses and a physiotherapist staff the frailty unit two days a week.

B bay - This is a triage room where patients' bloods and BP are done.

C bay - This is a well lit large waiting room with comfortable seating and a television. Ambulant patients wait here for tests and results.

D bay - This is an eight bedded ward for patients who are likely to be admitted or come for specified day care treatment. This bay also had reclining chairs.

E bay - a single side room that may be used as an isolation bed.

Approximately 300 patients a month are currently being treated on the ward,

We saw ambulance patients coming straight into the ward following initial triage carried out by ambulance staff.

Presenting patients are usually seen within 15 minutes of arrival. The ANPs can commission some investigations including scans. The ward has a fast track route to securing the scan, with ultra sound reports being received within an hour. We were told that CT scans are routinely carried out on the day and if an MRI scan cannot be done that day the patient will be invited back the next day for this.

Consultant staff told us that they were pleased to be working in such a pleasant environment, they reported that they felt its calm atmosphere assisted them in giving patients the time they needed for effective diagnosis and treatment.

Additional Comments

The overall feeling was of a well-staffed, well-organised unit that provided a useful facility avoiding hospital admission in many cases. There was a general air of calmness and all staff busy with the tasks in hand. The ward manager, Lisa, appeared to be providing good leadership and was committed to her job. She answered all our questions with great transparency and gave us her time unconditionally. Patients that we spoke to were all happy with their treatment and praised the staff. One gentleman in 'A' bay had been referred first thing that morning from his GP; he made his own way to the unit. He had had blood tests, an ECG and was awaiting a scan. He described his treatment as, "**First class,**" and was very impressed with the unit.

Another lady we spoke to in the waiting room told us that, "**She was very happy with her treatment,**" and that, "**The staff were wonderful.**"

One gentleman had brought his two children with him but this caused no problem for the unit.

One lady was attending the review clinic, she said, "**Sometimes there was a long wait for routine blood results and x-ray reports but overall was very pleased with her treatment.**"

Another lady and her daughter were unsure why they were there but it appeared they were awaiting results in the review clinic. They were impressed that the carers were given sandwiches as well as patients.

Representatives feel that the hospital should be congratulated and be proud of the high degree of efficiency shown on this ward.

Feedback from Provider of Service

Ambulatory care was developed to provide quality and safe care to a particular group of patients. Same day Rapid diagnostics are available along with Consultant review. The service was to be advanced nurse practitioner led with all patients receiving a senior review. The unit quickly developed, we introduced a review clinic which would enable patients to be discharged and reviewed with pending results the next day. Patient feedback has been very positive. 95% of patients sated they were very satisfied with the service and 98% were very satisfied with the quality care provided by the staff. The unit has monthly meetings where we discuss how the service and be developed further to provide quality care. James Stevens - Unit manager

Appendix Item - Supplied by provider

ACU Feedback Responses Apr 2014 - March 2015

	Number	%	Positive Feedback Comments	Negative Feedback Comments
Total No of Questionnaires Received	130	100%	Staff were helpful and took time to explain all procedures and tests follow up procedures etc very friendly	Been here nearly all day does it really need to take so long?
Was it easy to find the ACU when you arrived at the hospital? Y or N		99%	Excellent from Admin to Admittance Very Professional and Nothing too much trouble. Well done ACU.	I was brought into A&E and when I was brought here they never told my sister and left her waiting for an hour
How satisfied were you with the length of time you to wait to be seen? 1 to 10			The TLC was excellent Dr Hill and team couldn't have been kinder	Just the waiting
Very Satisfied	100	77%		
Satisfied	22	17%	Very helpful Doctor & nursing staff couldn't do enough and kept me reassured on times & plans. Very good trainee doctor!	A very long wait for the written report to come through for CT scan
Very Dissatisfied	8	6%		
			Super care received thank you so much to all the staff involved	Excellent staff waiting time awful
How would you describe the overall environment on the unit?				
Very Satisfied	123	95%	Excellent care. Patient focussed all staff credit to Countess	More information updates would be useful, especially when waiting for a number of hours
Satisfied	7	5%		
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%	Treatment was exceptional	I was in all day with little or no refreshments
How would you rate the service you received? 1 to 10			Kind and sympathetic approach	Wait for meds seemed a long time
Very Satisfied	124	95%		
Satisfied	5	4%	Very competent & Professional Polite and Friendly staff	long day waiting for results
Very Dissatisfied	1	1%		
			The help and service I received was such that I cannot praise it high enough	
How would you rate the quality of care provided by the staff who treated you on the unit? 1 to 10				
Very Satisfied	128	98%	Staff Great, Happy Helpful, Very Pleasant	
Satisfied	1	1%		
Very Dissatisfied	1	1%	An island of calm in the COCH ocean	