

Royal Blackburn Hospital

Enter and View visit to assess ward food on the Acute Medical Unit (AMU) and Ward D3

Report on services provided by East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust

Date of assessments: Monday 25th January 2016 11.00am to 2.30pm

Contact Details: Acute Medical Unit and Ward D3
Royal Blackburn Hospital
Haslingden Road
Blackburn
BB2 3HH

Senior Hospital Staff: **AMU**
Ward Manager, Elizabeth Liddle
Ward Manager, Alison Balshaw
Matron, Lesley Gaw

Ward D3
Ward Manager, Laura Taylor
Matron, Tracey Banes

**Healthwatch Lancashire
Authorised Representatives:** Amanda Higgins (Lead)
Liz Butterworth (Volunteer)
Carolyn Stuart (Volunteer)
Debbie McKno (Volunteer)

V2.1

Introduction

This Enter and View visit was undertaken in January 2016 by Authorised Representatives from Healthwatch Lancashire.

Authorised Representatives have statutory powers to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services, obtain the views of those people using the services, consider how services may be improved and how good practice can be disseminated.

The team of trained Enter and View Authorised Representatives visit the service, recording their observations along with feedback from patients, staff and, where possible, patients' families or friends.

The Enter and View team compile a report reflecting these observations and feedback, making comment where appropriate.



Acknowledgement

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank the ward managers together with staff and patients on the Acute Medical Unit (AMU) and D3 for being so welcoming and for taking part in the visit. The team would also like to thank the Patient Experience team at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust for their support and assistance in arranging this activity.

DISCLAIMER

THIS REPORT RELATES ONLY TO THE SERVICE VIEWED AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT, AND IS ONLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VIEWS OF THE STAFF, VISITORS AND PATIENTS WHO MET MEMBERS OF THE ENTER AND VIEW TEAM ON THAT DATE.

Rationale

The 2015 Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) results for ward food at Royal Blackburn Hospital scored the lowest out of all hospitals in Lancashire at 67.42%. This was 21.85% less than the national average.

The table below shows the difference in results within different geographical boundaries.

Location	Result
Royal Blackburn Hospital	67.42%
East Lancashire Hospitals Trust (excluding Royal Blackburn)	95.84%
Pan-Lancashire (excluding Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust)	90.91%
National average for all hospitals	89.27%

Data collated during Healthwatch Lancashire engagement activities from March - November 2015 support this trend, with food being the lowest average scorer at 3.7 out of 5, compared with all other questions asked of patients.

General Information

The two wards that the team visited at Royal Blackburn Hospital were Acute Medical Unit (AMU) and Ward D3 which were both chosen at random. The Acute Medical Unit is a forty-two bed fast flow ward where patients tend to stay between twenty-four and seventy-two hours. Ward D3 has twenty beds and patients' stay varies between one night and long stay.

Methodology

Before the visit, the following arrangements and actions were put in place:

- The Enter and View team, comprising of staff and volunteers, as identified.
- A poster was designed and displayed on the wards.
- A patient questionnaire was created.
- The Director of Nursing and Patient Engagement Lead were notified that the visit would take place, though the actual date of the visit was not announced.

During the visit:

- The team spoke individually to seventeen patients on the Acute Medical Unit and ten patients on Ward D3. Conversations were structured around a questionnaire based solely on ward food.
- Patients were spoken to prior to their lunch being served and following their lunch.
- In addition, we spoke to friends and family where possible. The team also recorded their own observations of the menu and service during lunch.

After the visit Healthwatch Lancashire:

- Sent the draft report and letter to the trust for their consideration and to check for factual accuracy.
- Notified the trust that their response will be added to the final report.
- Notified the trust that the report will be published and shared with relevant stakeholders.

Enter & View Observations

The Enter and View team visited the wards during the morning and early afternoon of Monday 25th January 2016. On arrival, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust Patient Experience Officer, Jennifer O'Malley, welcomed the team to the hospital and introduced us to the ward managers.

Following a brief introduction about the purpose of the visit, the team were shown around the wards and advised of any patients, that for infection control purposes, were not appropriate to speak with.

Posters informing patients of Healthwatch Lancashire's proposed visit were not displayed on either ward.

The Ward Manager on the Acute Medical Unit explained that because the ward is fast-flow, patients often do not receive a menu, but rather, are offered a choice of meal options when the food is being served.

Patients' Experiences of the Food on Acute Medical Unit

We asked patients a series of questions prior to the meal service.

Summary of responses

- Patients that had been admitted overnight did not receive a menu. Patients who stayed on the ward for more than one day received a menu.
- Of those that had received a menu, all found it simple and easy to understand.
- Of those that had received a menu, most patients were not asked if they need assistance reading the menu.
- Most patients were not asked if they need assistance when eating.
- Most patients were not asked if they have any dietary requirements. Staff said this would be picked up on the patients Generic Admissions Document (GAD) however, one patient could not eat bread or pastry, although it was still served to him.
- All patients were happy with the choice of food on the menu.

Quotes from patients

"The organisation of food in some respects is good. I think the food is good in the NHS. The porridge was terrific. They brought a few options of food."

"It does have a tick box for dietary requirements. It's almost like eating out. It exceeded my expectations."

"I came last night from Burnley General. I asked what food they had chosen for me and I was happy with the choice. However, they did put bread out for my lunch time meal; the cancer I have been treated for means I can't eat bread or pastry. So I just didn't eat it."

"Roast beef on Sunday was brilliant."

"I haven't seen a menu- they just tell you what they've got."

Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View representatives observations prior to and during food service.

Summary of observations

- Patient areas were cleared and ready for meal service.
- Patients were offered the chance to wash their hands prior to meal service using hand wipes in sealed packets.
- Patients were provided with napkins in their sealed cutlery packs.
- Staff were observed washing their hands and wearing aprons during food service.
- Patients were provided with good quality stainless steel cutlery and crockery.
- Patients were provided with fresh water.
- Staff were involved in the delivery of the food.
- Staff read out the options to each patient and gave them what they asked for.
- The team observed that for patients that did not like the options available, staff were flexible and sought alternatives.

We asked patients a series of questions after they had eaten.

Summary of responses:

- Of the patients that received a menu, all were served the food that they ordered.
- Most patients felt that their food was appetising.
- Most patients were happy with the temperature of the food.
- Most patients enjoyed the food.
- Most patients felt that the portion sizes were adequate and could ask for more if they wanted.
- All patients felt they were able to reach the food and drink comfortably.
- Most patients felt they could eat somewhere other than their bed.
- All patients felt the food was cleared away promptly after eating.

Quotes from patients

“There was a good choice with a couple of vegetarian options. It wasn’t cold but it was on the cool side.”

“The food was bland and tasteless. There’s not much choice either.”

“There was no salt and I like salt. They have served chips without salt.”

“The portion sizes are small. I’m not sure if I can ask for more - I would feel greedy, plus there’s no one to ask.”

“I didn’t enjoy the fish today. The jam sponge was good. There is plenty of food.”

“I think I slipped up - I should have had the fish but I asked for curry. I’ve struggled to eat it. I forgot my teeth so I’ve had to suck it to death. The sticky toffee pudding was lovely and I was able to eat it.”

“I couldn’t find fault with the food.”

“The food that I had was very good. I was the late one in so I didn’t get a choice but it was very good.”

Patients' Experiences of the Food on Ward D3

We asked patients a series of questions prior to meal service.

Summary of Responses:

- Most patients received a menu, although some had to ask.
- Some patients struggled to read and understand the menu.
- Some patients were asked if they need assistance eating the food. Some patients weren't asked.
- Of the patients that required assistance when eating, all received the help they needed.
- Most patients were asked if they required assistance reading the menu.
- Of the patients that needed help to ready the menu, most received the help required although one did not.
- Most patients were asked if they had any dietary requirements, although three did not.
- Some patients felt their dietary requirements were being catered for. Some felt their dietary requirements were not being catered for.
- Most patients were happy with the choice of food on the menu.

Quotes from patients

"I'm used to home food so I have scored this hospital food low, but it's only because it is not the same as home. I am happy with the food really."

"I had to ask for the menu."

"I found a hair in my food and had to send it back to the kitchen."

"My son completes the menu or staff do it when he is not here. I am diabetic."

"There is too much brown bread and I cannot digest it."

"I am happy with the food and choice on the menu. No issues with it."

"I am happy with the menu and the amount of food."

"I have a poor appetite at the moment, but the hot food is hot when it comes."

"I just get what is given. I have a soft diet and I'm diabetic. I'm happy with the food although I haven't seen a menu."

"I have a problem with my jaw so I choose the food the is soft. I haven't asked the nursing staff for a soft diet menu, I don't know if there is one. I just order the mashed potato and mashed carrot and things like that."

Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View representatives observations prior to and during food service.

- Patient areas were not cleared and ready for meal service.
- Doctors' rounds continued whilst food was being served.
- Patients were offered the chance to wash their hands prior to meal service using hand wipes in sealed packets. These were given out by the nurse.
- Patients were provided with napkins in their sealed cutlery packs.
- Staff were involved in the delivery of the food.
- The team observed patients being assisted eating their food. One nurse was seen cutting a registered blind patient's food into smaller pieces.
- The team observed one patient being helped by a nurse as he was struggling with a sauce packet.
- Red dots were placed on menus and red trays were being used to identify people who need assistance eating.
- Patients were provided with fresh water prior to meal service.
- Tea, coffee, milk and blackcurrant squash was also available.
- Drinking beakers were used by some patients.
- Patients were provided with good quality stainless steel cutlery and crockery.
- Staff were observed washing their hands and wearing aprons during food service.
- The dietary needs of two patients were written on signs above their beds; one with clear fluids only and one nil by mouth.
- There was no announcement that the food had been delivered to the ward.
- Puréed food served looked unappetising with most of the food creamy coloured. The food was not identifiable other than a different colour for the carrot.

We asked patients a series of questions after they had eaten.

Summary of Responses:

- All patients received the food that they ordered.
- Most patients found the food appetising.
- Most patients were happy with the temperature.
- Most patients enjoyed the food.
- Most patients felt that the portion sized were adequate.
- Most patients were able to reach the food and drink comfortably.
- Some patients felt they could eat away from their beds whilst others felt they were not given this option.
- All patients felt that the food was cleared away promptly after eating.

Quotes from patients:

“The menu said fresh fruit - I thought it would be a fruit salad but it was an apple.”

“I am happy with what I have received, but it is not home cooked food.”

“The staff have been very helpful.”

“I had to ask again to have the cucumbers removed from the salad” - (registered blind patient)

“The staff cut my food up for me and have explained what was on the plate.” - (registered blind patient)

“I was given a menu during food service and I was able to choose a meal.”

“I have eaten puréed fish and mash, soup and custard and jelly; none have been very nice. I get carrots all the time and I cannot stand them.”

“The chicken masala and jam sponge and custard was really really good.”

TRUST RESPONSE

Re: Response to Healthwatch Lancashire 'Enter and View' report to assess ward food on the Acute Medical Unit and Ward D3 at Royal Blackburn Hospital

Results of the 'Enter and View' visit were fed back to Meg Davey, Assistant Director for Patient Experience at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust.

Healthwatch Lancashire volunteers and staff are thanked for the work undertaken to support the Trust in highlighting positive findings around ward food from patients and their families.

The report also highlights areas for improvement, and we have worked with teams to provide information about actions taken in response to these comments

Processes have been put in place to ensure that patients with special dietary needs are identified daily by the shift co-ordinator who ensures the catering department are aware of those needs. This involves the appointment of a nutritional co-ordinator at the beginning of each shift who ensures patients receive the appropriate nutrition to meet their needs and choices.

A system has also been introduced to alert staff that the meal trolley has arrived on the ward and all staff are involved in meal service to ensure those patients who need assistance with nutrition receive the level of help required. An information board communicates to the team the dietary requirements for individual patients.

Ensuring patients receive the nutrition and hydration that they require is one of the Trust's Quality Improvement Priorities and there have been a number of projects undertaken over the past year including:

- Electronic forms to ensure everyone is screened for risk of malnutrition
- Eating and drinking care plans to ensure patients can express their likes and dislikes and any assistance they may require
- A trial of a new menu choice system on some wards that allows patients to choose their meal preference one meal in advance rather than the day before
- Snack boxes for patients who are hungry outside mealtimes.

The Trust has also launched its first Food and Drink Strategy which details its aspirations in providing healthy, nutritious and sustainable food, not only to patients, but to visitors and staff too.

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