

Hospital Discharge - London Borough of Lewisham

Strategic Drivers and Methodology

Healthwatch Lewisham carried out a research project to assess patients' and carers' experiences of being discharged from hospital. We made three separate visits to the discharge lounge at University Hospital Lewisham where we spoke with staff, patients, carers and family members. This information was analysed in addition to the feedback we have received from our hub engagement across the borough.

"Discharge from hospital is the point at which the patient leaves the hospital and either returns home or is transferred to another facility such as one for rehabilitation or to a nursing home."

Healthwatch set out to:

- *Investigate patient experiences of the discharge service within University Hospital Lewisham.*
- *Identify to what extent the discharge service meets the criteria set out by Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust.*
- *Evaluate advice and guidance provided by staff to understand the level of aftercare support for service users.*

Findings

- There is a good dialogue between patients and the nursing staff. The UHL discharge team were praised for being very positive, warm and welcoming towards patients.
- Patients felt they generally received a good quality of treatment during their stay.
- People felt there was poor internal communication between the nurses and the consultants and doctors.
- 2.7% of patients were readmitted within 48 hours of discharge, otherwise known as a failed discharge.
- Those who used the discharge lounge were happy with the environment and cleanliness within the hospital.
- 61% of admissions to the hospital presented as an emergency rather than a planned visit.

- A significant number of patients felt they were not adequately involved in the decision-making process regarding their discharge plan.
- 42% of patients said that the information received prior to discharge regarding support services in the community needs improvement.

Patients were asked to score the quality of service received based on 7 categories. A 5 star system was used with 1 being considered poor and 5 excellent. The following table details the overall patient ratings for each category:

The Hospital experience	Score
The cleanliness of the hospital	4 out of 5
The treatment you received by healthcare staff during your stay	4 out of 5
The environment within the hospital	4 out of 5
The information you received about support services available after discharge	3 out of 5
The information you were given regarding the discharge process	3 out of 5
Communication throughout your stay	3 out of 5
The involvement you felt in the decision-making process to leave the hospital	3 out of 5

Key Recommendations

Healthwatch Lewisham recommends that Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust incorporate the following recommendations:

- Provide additional training around internal communication would help to enhance the patient experience during the discharge process.
- Improve the signposting information about support services available after discharge. Make signposting information regarding support services after discharge readily available.
- Ensure medication required by patients is available at the time of discharge. This would help to significantly reduce the length of waiting times in the discharge lounge.
- Further develop staff training around patient and family involvement in the discharge process.

Local impact and outcome

As a result of our findings, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust (LGT) have produced an action plan based on our recommendations. A summary of key actions are detailed below:

Communication

Following our report UHL have introduced a communication sheet in front of all medical notes for use by all involved in patient care. Staff have been reminded of the “#Hello my name is ...”; a Trust wide initiative scheme with the incorporation of yellow visible name badges to ensure that all staff introduce themselves and can be easily identified.

Signposting resources

LGT will educate staff and develop an information leaflet / pack to signpost and inform patients, carers and family of relevant resources, support services, contact number for wards and advice. The Home First Choice letters / Leaflet will also address this once it becomes available.

Medication

This report has been shared and highlighted to nurses, pharmacists and medical colleagues to ensure medications are ready the day before discharge.

Involving patients in the discharge process

The Discharge team have been asked to put training in place for discharge processes. There will also be a new campaign around discharge processes and the use of the discharge lounge.

Healthwatch Lewisham is encouraged by Lewisham and Greenwich Trust proactive response to our recommendations and look forward to seeing the full impact of the changes and developments in patient care and involvement with regards to discharge.

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*For a copy of the full report please call **020 8315 1916** or for further information about Healthwatch, please go to: www.healthwatchlewisham.co.uk*

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