

Quality Assurance Visit Report

Service: Continence Care

Date: 08.08.2018

Time: 1:00pm

Summary

Healthwatch Newham (HWN) visited the Continence Care Service at Eneberi Clinic, at 29 Romford Road. The purpose of our visit was to find out about patients referral pathway experiences as part of our joint Quality Assurance project with Newham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

The continence care service gain referrals from two routes, which are GPs or through a process of self-referrals which can be completed by the patient themselves or their carer. The service manages a range of conditions, which include pelvic dysfunction, female genital mutilation, bladder and bowel incontinence.

On the day of the visit, HWN were able to speak with 7 service users via a telephone call to complete the questionnaire. Of the 7 users, we spoke to 4 carers who were family members, that responded on behalf of the service user. The service manager granted us permission to contact service users.

Please note as the questions were asked via telephone call, some of the users said they only had a couple minutes and were unable to expand on their responses to some questions. Family carers who spoke on behalf of the service user could not provide detailed responses as they did not have complete knowledge on some question such as how service users were informed about their first appointment.

Understanding of the service

All the service users said they understood why they were referred to the continence care service. In relation to receiving sufficient information and choice, the service users who were referred by their GP said that they did provide them with information regarding the service. Those who self-referred said that they knew about the service already and due to having incontinence issues, felt it was the right service.

42% said that they were informed about their first appointment through a letter. 30% of the service users said that they were informed in person and the remaining 28% could not remember how they were informed of their appointment.

Referral Process

In regards to referrals to the continence care service, 57% said they were referred by their GP, 28% said they self-referred and 15% said they were referred by the Hospital. 71% said that they did not have to wait a long time to attend their first appointment; the maximum wait was two weeks. One user said that they received their appointment within a week of the referral being made. Of the remaining service users, 29% had to wait more than a month. One user felt this was because the service did not have their full medical records due to their gynaecologist not providing the information, which caused the delay. Another user said they made more than one referral to their service through their carer, district nurse and neurologist so were not sure which referral was processed as it took a long time to receive their first appointment.

Services working together effectively

57% of the service users stated that the services were effective in ensuring there was a smooth transition. Some of the evidence that users provided to support the fact that their was a smooth transition is they did not have to repeat information to the advisor at the clinic. A user said that they had built a good relationship with staff at the clinic and felt they were treated with respect.

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43% of service users said that they did not feel there was good communication and collaboration between health services. A service user stated that this is because the gynaecologist failed to provide the clinic with their records. Another user said that the GP service caused issues with their referral but the clinic itself is not difficult and were treated with utmost professionalism.

All users said that the continence care service addressed their health needs. One user said that they had dementia and the service took this into consideration provided them with support they needed. Another user said that the service also took into account their work needs and arranged appointments that suited their schedule.

Patient Health Plan

All users said that they understood their health plan needs and were provided with substantial information about what their next steps would be. From these users, some of the responses we received were that if they did not understand anything, they felt comfortable to ask their advisor at any point. The service users were unable to elaborate on whether they knew what their medication or discharge plan was due to time constraints.

Access needs

57% said that the service catered to their access needs. For instance, service users were provided with a translator and female physician when required. The remaining 43% said that this was not applicable to them, as they did not have access requirements.

Signposting

71% of service users said that being signposted for additional support was not necessary for them, so did not require the service to do so. The other 29% said that they were informed about other services and one user said they found being signposted helpful.

Conclusion

71% of the users we spoke with rated their referral pathway experience as 'excellent.' 28% provided a rating of 'good.' A user that rated it as 'good' said that their referral process could have been better if there was better communication between health services. However, they said that once they were administered into service their advisor was helpful and were receiving the treatment they needed.

Patients' comments about the service

'I have no complaints about the service, it is excellent.'

'The advisors are very helpful.'

'Appointments are tailored to your availability which makes it easier'

'The advisor listens to your issues and the treatment the clinic provides is good.'

'Health service should not belittle female incontinence issues and should take it seriously when you self-refer.'

Recommendations

The cause of referral delays and communication patterns with GPs and other health service should be reviewed, as lack of communication was raised by 43% of service users as an issue; and 29% users who had to wait for over a month for their appointment.

Service response

The service manager did not have any comments to add and said "it is a comprehensive report; the contents were factual and seemed positive."

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