

Better Care Plan engagement report:

an evaluation of Salisbury NHS
Foundation Trust Early Supported
Discharge Service for patients with
fractured neck of femur

Local health
and care
shaped by you

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Background

Healthwatch Wiltshire is working with the Better Care Plan Programme partnership, (Wiltshire Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group), to assist in meeting their aspiration to see health and social care integrated by 2020. The vision for better care is based on the four priorities set out in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy: –

“I will be supported to live healthily, I will be listened to and involved, I will be supported to live independently and I will be kept safe from avoidable harm”.

These translate into a design of services which will result in improvements against five indicators:

- admissions to residential and nursing care
- success of reablement and rehabilitation
- delayed transfers of care
- avoidable emergency admissions
- patient and service user experience

The therapy team at Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust has developed an Early Supported Discharge (ESD) service for patients with a fractured neck of femur, and this has been operating since October 2016. The service supports patients to be discharged as soon as they are medically fit and then provides rehabilitation and reablement at home. In line with the key principles of Better Care, the service aims to reduce length of stay in an acute hospital, and to provide person-centred care as close to home as possible.

The Therapy Team approached Healthwatch Wiltshire for assistance in independently gathering patient and unpaid carer feedback on the service.



What we did

- We had discussions with the ESD team manager about the service aims and the outcomes they wanted to find out about.
- We designed focus group questions and materials, in collaboration with the team.
- We facilitated a focus group involving two group discussions with patients and unpaid carers.
- We analysed the results of questionnaires that had been sent out by the team.
- We analysed the patient feedback from the friends and family test surveys that had been completed about the ESD Service.

Our volunteers

Healthwatch Wiltshire has a team of trained volunteers. Three of our volunteers were involved contributing a total of 15 hours of their time. They supported the engagement by facilitating and note taking at the group discussions and typing up the notes afterwards.



The key messages

Nearly all patients said that they wanted to be supported to go home from hospital as soon as possible
People told us that the support they received from the ESD team enabled them to return home quickly.
People were very happy with the quantity and quality of support provided by the ESD team and its approach.
People were not always clear about the specific role of the team in supporting early discharge.
It was clear that support was individually tailored and that the ESD team could be very flexible with the support they offered. This enabled people to be discharged more quickly.
People felt some elements of the discharge process could be improved, e.g. getting medication.
People said that transfers between the ESD team and community services went smoothly after discharge.
People said they had the right equipment in place ready for when they returned home.
Patients relatives and families were generally happy with the discharge process, but their responses were not as positive as the patients’.

Detailed information about people's views and experiences

Focus groups

Our focus groups were attended by seven people; five were patients and two were unpaid carers. We split into two groups and facilitated group discussions based around the following questions:

1. Can you tell us a bit about how your discharge was planned?
2. How did you feel when you were told you were going home?
3. How did it work for you when you were discharged?
4. What do you know about the ESD team? What was their role in your discharge?
5. How would you describe the level of support after you were discharged?
6. How were your family/ friends involved in your discharge? What would they say about your discharge from hospital?
7. Were there any other agencies involved in supporting you? If so, how did this work out?
8. What do you think worked well about the discharge process?
9. Is there anything that would have made your discharge better?
10. Is there anything that would have made you feel confident to be discharged earlier?
11. Is there anything else you'd like to say about your discharge and ongoing support?

Here is a summary of what we were told during these discussions:

People said that they were told about their discharge and largely understood the plan for what would be happening. Most people said that they felt fine about returning home. Some people talked about minor concerns but said that these were resolved. One person said that ideally, they would have liked some more practice walking in hospital before going home. People said that they wanted to return home as soon as they could and felt that the support from the ESD team enabled them to do this. It was suggested that if people had more physiotherapy in hospital and starting earlier, they might have felt confident in being discharged earlier.

We were told that patients knew the individual members of the ESD team and understood that they would be supporting them with their discharge. However most of the people we spoke to weren't

aware of the team by name or of their specific role in supporting early discharge. One patient suggested they would have felt more confident if they had known that this was the focus of the team.

Overall, people said they were happy with how their discharge went. However, some mentioned problems with arrangements, including being sent home with the wrong medication, discharge instructions not





being clear and later, some confusion about arrangements for sutures being removed. These issues were resolved but we were told that, if they had been avoided, this would have made the process smoother.

Most of those in our focus group were seen by a member of the ESD team on the day of their discharge, and found this positive and reassuring. One person who lived alone described how the ESD team were there to

meet them. They helped them settle in and made sure they had everything they needed and were able to get around their home. It was clear from this that the team were very flexible and adapted their support to this individual's needs. This person told us that, without this support, they didn't think that they would have been able to go home at that stage and that they appreciated this support as they wanted to go home as soon as possible. They said the team continued to support them regularly over the following two weeks.

In general, people told us they had enough support after discharge and they talked about follow-up visits from the ESD team. They described team members as being professional, caring,

"All very good and working as a team for the patient. Nothing too much trouble, kind and gentle like a friend calling."

understanding and encouraging. They told us that they were given a contact number for the team, one person who called the number with a question, was offered a home visit and a member of the team visited the following morning. This person was pleased with the response they received to their phone call. Some people talked about the support and encouragement the team gave them with exercises and moving off crutches and said that they thought this was helpful and speeded their recovery.

The relatives who attended the focus group told us they felt supported during the patient's discharge by both the ESD team and their own communities. Some relatives were able to provide

care themselves and some were supported by others. From the discussions, this appeared to be planned according to individual needs and circumstances. One relative said that they thought they might have benefitted from more advice and training about the correct manual handling techniques to support the person getting in and out of bed in the early days following discharge.

Other things mentioned:

During the focus groups people mentioned other aspects of their stay in hospital. In general, they were happy with the treatment and quality of care they received. However, they mentioned some instances that they felt could be improved. They said that they found some of the agency nurses 'brusque' and thought they did not come across as well as regular staff. Some people were embarrassed about having to use a bed pan, some said that they observed that curtains were not always drawn when patients were supported with personal care and some female patients said that they felt uncomfortable receiving personal care from male staff.



Questionnaires

The ESD team sent out questionnaires to all patients who used the early supported discharge team. The questionnaires had one section for patients to complete and a section to pass on to family or friends who they felt were closely involved in their discharge. The team received 25 completed questionnaires, approximately a 50% response rate. These have been shared anonymously with Healthwatch Wiltshire.

Responses from patients

The questions for patients were divided into two parts; the first asking about their experience of discharge and the second asking what they thought was important. In general, responses were very positive about patient's experience of discharge.

People were particularly positive about:

- support meeting their needs effectively when they returned home
- feeling well supported by the ESD team
- being given and encouraged with exercises
- transition of care from ESD team to care services at home

Areas where there were a few less positive responses referred mostly to aspects of discharge planning such as being aware of discharge date, having a consistent member of staff planning discharge and patient's awareness of plans for transport home and support at home before leaving hospital. A small number of patients also said they weren't aware that they could contact the ESD team if they were admitted to hospital again in the future.

"Once decided it was time to go home, someone visited our house to approve the plan for sleeping downstairs - my husband was able to prepare for my arrival but we didn't get the signal till last minute Saturday afternoon."

"A good speedy and efficient discharge, the ESD team took me home, without their input my hospital admission would have been extended, I was very grateful."

Patients were also able to write free text comments in response to questions about the discharge process. Responses here were also very positive about the ESD team and about arrangements for the right equipment to be in place when patients returned home. Suggestions for improving the discharge process were largely based around notice and preparation for the day of discharge.

In terms of patient opinion on what was important about their discharge, aspects that were rated extremely important were:

- having a telephone number to call for questions or problems
- having opportunities to ask questions about discharge plans
- having worries or concerns about discharge listened to and understood

"The preparation for my return home by the OT and PT while I was in hospital - crutches, raised loo seat, a percher, high seated chair, and arrangements for a grab rail to be fitted beside the shower. This was all excellent. And you knew that I would have to be able to climb two flights of stairs before I could be discharged."

Responses from friend and families

The questionnaire responses from friends and family members that patients felt were closely involved in their discharge were also mostly positive. However overall, they were less positive than the responses from patients. The aspects that friends and family members rated most positively were:

- that the ESD team improved their confidence in the discharge process
- that the transition to ongoing care and therapy from the ESD team to community-based teams was smooth and seamless

“Advice given as a carer, punctuality of visits (had to take time out from work), gave my wife confidence, approachable staff, easy to talk to and ask questions.”

The aspects that friends and family members were less positive about were:

- understanding of what their relative needed to achieve to go home
- feeling empowered to take an active role in discharge and
- having clear opportunities to ask questions about discharge plans

“Short notice, but hospital ward staff had already sorted out equipment needs, and ESD team bringing my wife home helped me, not sure if this process is good to everyone however.”

Friends and family test surveys

The Friends and Family Test is a quick and anonymous way that patients can give their views about NHS Services. The hospital shared the results of the 45 surveys that had been completed about Early Supported Discharge.

The survey asks Would you recommend this service to friends and family? The table below is an analysis of the responses to this question:

Extremely likely.	87% (39)
Likely	7% (3)
Nether likely or unlikely	2% (1)
Unlikely	0% (0)
Extremely Unlikely	0% (0)
Don't know	4% (2)

“I was well looked after, no health problems and everything explained to me in full.”

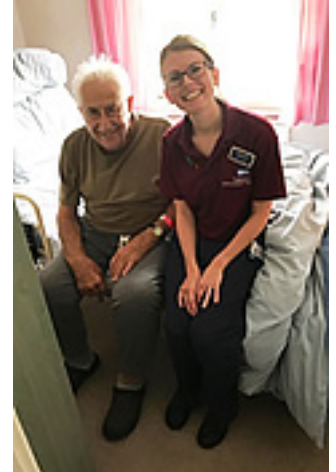


The majority of the free text comments that people left on the survey were favourable. 41 of the responses were wholly positive, one had positive and negative elements and two were negative. The negative comments related to waiting for equipment, lack of support with shopping and personal care and difficulties getting to the doctor's surgery on public transport. Two of these comments highlighted difficulties for people who did not have family support. The positive comments related to quality of care, discharge arrangements and helpful and friendly staff.

"I received great care and attention coupled with encouragement and friendliness"

"Team had a trolley and raised toilet seat with support rails delivered before my discharge, and within a week fitted a rail outside to enable me to go to my back garden."

"All member of staff were extremely helpful to ensure smooth transition to home life. Home follow up visits were helpful. They went that extra yard."



"Early discharge is fine if have family who can help you get to the doctors when needed. If not it is hard work on public transport as there is no help if you are on your own."

"Two visits isn't really support is it? Very limited. Cooking/shopping/showering??? A scary prospect for a person with no family support to rely on."



Conclusions and recommendations

From the patient's perspective the ESD team appears to be working well and offering high quality support. The team may want to consider the following recommendations:

- retaining the current ethos and working practice of team
- patients could be made more aware of the team's specific role to support early discharge; this may increase some patients' confidence to leave hospital earlier
- considering whether physiotherapy could be started any earlier on the ward for some patients
- looking at any further ways in which patients' relatives and friends can feel more involved and empowered in the discharge process

- consider whether there is a need to double check the discharge needs of people with no support at home are met in all cases
- working with other parts of the hospital to ensure all aspects of early supported discharge go as smoothly as possible

“All the ESD team we came into contact with were professional, sympathetic to our concerns and extremely helpful. They always gave time to listen to our concerns and would help all they could. Because the care package could not be put in place for several days the ESD team would attend my mother each morning. This was so good and such a boost to her confidence and ours as we could ask about any worries we had. They always showed kindness and it meant Mum could get home (which she was keen to do) earlier than if she had to wait for the care package to start. Also aids were arranged efficiently. All in all – Excellent!”

Response from Early Supported Discharge Team

The report was shared with the early supported discharge team and they have given us this response:

We are extremely grateful to Healthwatch Wiltshire and to our patients and relatives for all their support and feedback in generating this report. It is a valuable resource in understanding how patients have experienced our service which is extremely important when setting up new services.



Within the ESD team we strive to remain flexible and to ensure that the service meets the needs of the patients, and is shaped by their needs as opposed to what we offer being dictated by what is available. We strive to go the extra mile for our patients – whether that is taking them shopping on their way home to ensure that they are confident in returning to doing this independently, or teaching them to use online shopping to help them maintain their independence. Each patient is an individual with different needs and things that matter to them, and we strive to reflect this in the service that we offer.

In order to ensure that this quality and flexibility continues, this report has highlighted to us that some aspects of the service need enhancing – particularly around communication. We hope to be able to work alongside our patients in developing communication strategies to support the discharge process that will boost their confidence, and that of relatives and carers, and improve their experience of leaving hospital.

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