



Coventry LINK's comments

Coventry LINK welcomes the role all LINKs have of providing a short comment on the quality of services within local Trusts.

The Trust has been working to improve quality in 3 areas: of hospital acquired infections, hospital discharge and information for patients.

Regarding hospital discharge: we were pleased that within 2010 University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) responded to Coventry LINK's report and recommendations regarding hospital discharge entitled *Hospital Discharge: Recommendations about the discharge policy and process of University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire*. LINK made recommendations regarding discharge policy and procedures; discharge planning, communication; ensuring patients do not go hungry or thirsty whilst in the process of discharge; and use of the hospitality lounge.

For example, the change in use of the hospitality lounge to a discharge lounge is welcomed (signage does need to be adjusted) and LINK is pleased to note that the discharge policy is being deployed across the hospital. The LINK would like regular updates on progress with this policy including the deployment of discharge co-ordinators and the information given to patients prior to and on discharge.

The Trust's work this year to address issues with discharge are important steps forward and we look forward to further progress to ensure consistency of discharge experience for patients. As hospital discharge is such an important area of care Coventry LINK will continue to follow up on progress regarding the recommendations we made. We believe that work to improve discharge experience for patients should remain a high priority for the Trust.

Steps to improve patient information at UHCW such as the new bedside folder are to be welcomed – it is important that these are available for all beds, and kept updated regularly and available in alternative formats such as large print. Coventry LINK has been carrying out work to look at outpatient booking letters of communication following feedback to LINK from patients about confusion over appointments. We are pleased the UHCW is undertaking a review of the content of letters with a view to making them more accessible and user friendly. We would however like to see work to address the multiple and sometimes contradictory letters, which are generated regarding appointment dates and times, to be taken forward as a matter of priority.

The Trust has identified Sepsis (the body's response to infection); Nutrition; and caring for patients with dementia as its priorities for quality work in 2011-12.

Coventry LINK has not received any feedback regarding Sepsis but recognises that infection control is an important area of work.

University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust Quality Account: 2010-11

Recent research including a report from the Parliamentary Ombudsman about care of older people raised through NHS Complaints have identified big issues with patient nutrition within hospitals. Therefore LINK believes there is a sound basis for work at UHCW to focus on addressing possible malnutrition and dehydration within all patients.

Care for patients with dementia: Coventry LINK has been scoping potential LINK work regarding care of people with Dementia in Coventry by identifying work already being done or in progress and gathering feedback from key voluntary sector organisations. Through this work one of the areas identified as a concern in Coventry was care for people whilst in hospital. Therefore LINK supports this area of work for 2011-12.

LINK received the draft Quality Account on 27th April. This draft was missing considerable amounts of data (for example all the performance information relating to CQUIN) as this would not be collated until a later date which means that LINK's analysis can only be partial and may miss some important issues. It would be more helpful if all information relating to 2010/11 was ready by the end of April. For example, on page 6, there was a comment about reducing rates of infection for the third year in a row, but the reference is missing and the data hard to locate within the report, which makes it impossible for LINK to comment upon this.

This was also LINK's main opportunity to input into the Quality Account, and in future LINK would like to be involved much earlier in the process, including an opportunity to comment on potential priorities for the coming year prior to decisions by the Trust. Furthermore there is no information within the Quality Account about how patients and the public have been involved and consulted within the drafting of the Quality Account.

The information on complaints needs setting in context – do these include complaints that go through PALS and written comments (not just on-line comments through the Trust's Impressions survey)?

The LINK welcomes the use of the glossary but notes that there are other technical terms or health jargon (e.g. "pathway") that would be useful additions. Aside from the use of jargon, the document is generally readable and clearer than the Quality Account for last year, although in places it can be difficult to navigate, for example clearer differentiation between past data for 2010/11 and future plans for 2011/12 would be helpful.

LINK would like to further build on relationships with the Trust over the coming year as we believe there are opportunities to work together to improve patient experience. LINK can provide an important route to involving patients and the public and providing an independent patient and public perspective on work such as new information leaflets, processes and other initiatives. We also hope for an ongoing dialogue regarding the quality work being undertaken in 2011-12. Coventry LINK is beginning its transition taking on the role of Local HealthWatch as per the Government's NHS plans.

[917 words]