

JOINT CITY AND COUNTY HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 FEBRUARY 2009

REPORT OF HEAD OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS TRUST – EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DISCHARGE POLICY

1 SUMMARY

This meeting will be attended by Dr Stephen Fowlie, Medical Director at Nottingham University Hospitals Trust and Caron Swinscoe, Clinical Lead for Acute Medicine, Nottingham University Hospitals Trust (NUH). They will be updating members on the issues raised in relation to their Emergency Department (ED) discharge policy by the Committee at their meeting in July 2008.

2 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

Members are requested to consider the information contained within this report (paragraph 3.3 and Appendix 1) and the verbal presentation to be provided by Dr Stephen Fowlie and Caron Swinscoe and use it to inform their questioning and any recommendations they wish to make.

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At their meeting in April 2008 members of this Committee considered a referral from the City Council's Health Scrutiny Panel. The Panel was carrying out a review of Dual Diagnosis Services (services for individuals with both mental health and substance misuse problems). During discussions with service users a number of individuals mentioned problems they had experienced when they were discharged from the Emergency Department (ED), including lack of referral to other services and difficulties in accessing transport home. During separate discussions on the subject of avoidable injuries, the Panel also heard that elderly people discharged from the ED following treatment for a fall were not always referred to the Falls Prevention Service.
- 3.2 The Panel referred these issues to the Joint Committee and the Joint Committee agreed to investigate them further. Concerns were discussed with NUH representatives at the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee meeting of 8th July 2008.
- 3.3 While some of the issues were addressed in the meeting in July, further concerns were raised and additional information requested as follows:
 - How to address the needs of people with alcohol problems once discharged from the ED, when it was known that attendance rates for subsequent outpatient appointments is low.
 - Arrangements ensuring that services are joined up so that the patient does not have to suffer when responsibilities of care are divided between different providers.

- Consideration of where people who have to wait for their transport home after treatment at the ED can wait in comfort with access to refreshments.
- Data on the total waiting times for patients who are dependent on patient transport services ie the time they have waited in ED plus the time they then wait for transport home
- Further information about the complaints process to ensure it is working satisfactorily.

3.3 This review of the ED discharge policy was initiated following a referral from the City Council's Health Scrutiny Panel in April 2008 in relation to its review of Dual Diagnosis. Since the July meeting the City Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee has completed and published its findings and recommendations. As part of the follow-up work to the review, members met with service users again to find out their views of the final report. At this meeting continuing concerns regarding discharge from the ED were raised. An extract from the minutes from this meeting, which detail these concerns, are attached at Appendix 1.

3.4 Representatives of Nottingham University Hospitals will attend this meeting to update the Committee on the issues raised at the meeting in July and the additional issues raised in relation to the City Council's review of Dual Diagnosis.

4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Appendix 1 – Extract from the minutes of the meeting between Dual Diagnosis Review Study Group Members and the Dual Diagnosis / Mental Health Focus Group – 25 November 2008

5 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING EXEMPT OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

None

6 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint City and County Health Scrutiny Committee held on 8 July 2008.

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30 January 2009

Meeting between Dual Diagnosis Review Study Group Members and the Dual Diagnosis / Mental Health Focus Group – 25 November 2008

Extract from the Minutes

Attending

Glen Jarvis	CDP – Facilitator and minutes
Maggy Topley	Partnership Development Team
8 service users	
Emma Dewinton	City Councillor
Sue Johnson	City Councillor
Kim Pocock	O&S Co-ordinator

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Discharge from the Emergency Department (ED) was again raised as a key issue. People described past and recent experiences:

- Being discharged with no transport and no money for a taxi. 3 weeks ago GJ had given money for a taxi to a service user who had been discharged from the ED at 5am and was sitting on the side of the road waiting for a bus.
- Being discharged from the ED and not being allowed to wait inside for their lift home.
- People with mental health problems and on medication are sometimes thought to be drunk and treated as such if they present to the ED.
- Referral to Psychiatric Services is not always the best option - someone who presents to ED with drug / alcohol problems might be more appropriately referred to drug or alcohol services.
- People in mental distress are less able to deal with what you have to do to get home when discharged.
- Support is also needed for those who discharge themselves, and for the families / carers that they return to.
- Some homeless people apparently try to get themselves admitted to the ED by injuring themselves in order to secure warmth, shelter and company. Some of these people appear well known to the ED staff. There is a perception that there is no emergency night shelter accommodation in Nottingham. The Gateway service (Housing Aid & Homelessness) Service was seen as not accessible 24 hours a day.
- Concerns were raised about lack of common courtesy from staff in the ED.

Action: Emma Dewinton undertook to raise with Dave Liversidge (Executive Member Adult Services and Health), the concerns about the accessibility of Gateway. It was explained that discharge issues have already been raised with Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) about the service at their Emergency Department on the Queen’s Medical Centre campus. The concerns raised by service users at this Focus Group will again be taken back to NUH. The issue is being dealt with by the Joint City and County Health Scrutiny Committee, which is due to consider discharge from hospital again in the New Year, 2009. Scrutiny Officers will inform NUH of the additional concerns raised at this meeting of the Dual Diagnosis Focus Group, so that we can get answers from them about their service, at the relevant Joint Health meeting.

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