

Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire CCGs – EDS Public Grading 2016

Outcome 2.4 People's complaints about services are handled respectfully and efficiently

NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit deliver a complaints, PALs and MP letters service on behalf of both Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire CCGs. The service is delivered by a team based in Rugeley, Staffordshire who work on behalf of a group of seven CCGs in total. The team is made up of a manager, three complaint handlers and a PALs worker.

The CCGs remain the 'accountable body' with overall responsibility for complaints. The responsibilities of each organisation are set out on the attached slide. Importantly, the CSU team are responsible for contact with patients, their families, carers and representatives.

During 2015 / 2016, the two CCGs together received approximately 200 complaints (complaints and MP letters combined). Due to the number of organisations individuals can complaint to, it is recognised that this number is low in comparison to provider organisations.

The CSU team is fully committed to ensuring fair access to our information and services from all local residents including those from groups protected by the Equality Act 2010 and this is an area that the CCGs have focussed on during 2015 / 2016 to ensure that complaints from individuals from protected groups are handled respectfully and efficiently. A review of cases during 2015/16 highlighted a number of instances where we had dealt appropriately with people across the protected groups. Examples of these include:

- A mum of a teenage girl who had a learning disability. She believed she had been treated less favourably when accessing local NHS services and had not been listened to. This was because she was both young and had a disability. We first addressed the question of how her complaint would be best made and whether we should talk to the mum as the complainant or deal with the patient directly. This was done sensitively and compassionately. The conclusion was that she wanted to give her mum informed consent to work with us. We did this and the complaint was fully investigated and responded to.
- A local resident raised concerns about mental health services in Stoke-on-Trent. As a parent of two adult daughters with mental health problems she was concerned about a lack of services. Also, she considered the service they had received was poor. We investigated the complaint but also invited this lady to meet with the CCG Clinical Lead for Mental Health, and join the patient congress to ensure her views and experiences are heard. Her points have been distributed to the task groups for the new strategy - Mental Health – Everyone's Business.

These are just a couple of examples of how the Complaints Team ensured that complaints from individuals from protected groups were handled respectfully and efficiently, and where appropriate, the learning incorporated into the future vision for these services.

Whilst we do not collect equality monitoring information at the point in which individuals access the service, it is evident from a review of our complaints that some of these may be from protected groups; from identifying this at the outset as per the examples above, or through the review of any trends and themes from complaints e.g. continuing healthcare.

It has therefore been a focus of the CCGs Complaints and PALS Assurance Group to implement a customer satisfaction survey for individuals to complete should they wish at the closure of their complaint, to gain their views on how their complaint was handled. This includes the collection of anonymous equality monitoring information to be able to identify and understand if complaints from protected groups were handled respectfully and efficiently compared to overall. The group consists of representation from both CCGs, executive and lay members, quality team representatives, the CSU complaints team and Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent and Healthwatch Staffordshire. The national Ombudsman publication 'My Expectations' was used as the basis for the questions included within the survey. The full report can be accessed via:

http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/28774/Vision_report.pdf

This has been in operation since the 1st April 2016 for all complaints at the point in which the complaint is closed. Telephone contact is also being undertaken for the period quarter 4 - 2015 / 2016 to gather views and feedback, including equality monitoring information for those complaints closed during this period.

Whilst it is acknowledged that response rates will be small due to the number of our complaints overall, the CCGs consider this an important piece of work to collect this information and where feedback is identified, learn from this.

Copies of the customer satisfaction cover letter, survey and equality monitoring information is enclosed.