

## Healthwatch Derbyshire - Discharge

At Healthwatch Derbyshire we have collected (and continue to collect) comments and experiences regarding discharge from acute hospitals. Although there are some positive comments, it would be true to say that there are far more negatives than positives. The types of experiences most commonly reported are to do with delays to discharge, and to a lesser extent, quality and communication. Discharge is certainly not a new issue, and both Royal Derby and Chesterfield Royal (the two acute trusts we hold most information about) have indicated in their responses to our comments that the issues are well known but complex, and they are involved in projects and initiatives to make improvements. Themes are as follows:

### Delays

- Delay caused by a discharge which is not back to the normal place of residence, such as a care home or a community hospital
- Delay receiving medication to take away with the patient. Several comments talk about medication following later on by taxi
- Delay with non-emergency patient transport back to place of residence

### Quality

- Medication errors on discharge - most commonly missing medication

### Communication

- Issues around communication to patients and their family throughout the discharge process
- Issues around identifying what care and support will be needed, and who can provide this, when back at home

Healthwatch has not collected any more accounts of discharge that would seem unsafe or inappropriate since the comments previously reported to this committee as part of the care home enter and view programme.

### Care Homes Advisory Service Feedback

One additional source of feedback comes from the 'Care Home Advisory Service' (part of Derbyshire Community Health Services NHS Foundation Trust) who ran a series of stakeholder events in late 2014 for agencies and stakeholders involved with the provision of care to older people in care homes across Derbyshire. Their final report summarises the workshop conversations:

...A number of tables spoke about resident's transfer of care: 1) in and out of hospital and 2) between services. Their key concerns were:

- We need more detailed care plans or discharge letters - can we develop an easy transfer document? .... At times the handover can be poor..."Care co-ordinators have been a great help."
- The transfer between hospitals and care homes seems more difficult. Information getting lost within the hospitals. Can a discharge checklist be implemented? - E.g. so medications don't end up following in a taxi. Can moving and handling plan be sent in either direction, along with appropriate walking aids?

The report states that there is learning for all parties involved in the care of that individual, with a real need for good two way communication throughout the process between all involved. This provides some insight from care home personnel as to what the issues are for them, and some potential solutions.

### Next steps

Healthwatch Derbyshire does not plan any more active engagement at this stage around this topic, but will continue to monitor and keep abreast of the programmes for improvement to discharge being undertaken by the acute trusts to get a sense of any impact/improvement.