

**STOKE MANDEVILLE HOSPITAL
NATIONAL SPINAL INJURIES CENTRE**

PATIENTS' FORUM

**Notes of meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2003
at 6.30 pm in the NSIC Dining Room**

Present: Tom Meagher (Chair) Dot Tussler
Seven patients in attendance

ACTION

1. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th August 2003 were approved.

2. **Matters arising**

TM informed the meeting that David Griffiths had commenced in his post as Manager of the NSIC, and welcomed his appointment. Mr Griffiths was an experienced Manager with detailed knowledge of Stoke Mandeville, which would be of great benefit to the Unit. Mr Griffiths would attend some Patient Forum meetings when he had got to grips with his brief.

Patient Line – An initial meeting would be held with Patient Line on 6th October. As previously indicated, there would be a possibility to install portable TVs. We had been asked to indicate the number required. It was as yet uncertain what rates Patient Line would charge following full installation. **Note** - the installation of dedicated bedside units would not be for at least a year, and possibly longer.

ACTION: DGi to liaise with Ward Sisters to estimate the number of TV units that need replacing.

DGi

Dining room chairs – It was explained that these were initially cleared as requested in the previous meeting. Sir Jimmy Savile had not been aware of the request and had reversed this order. This situation had been clarified. There was a general complaint that there were still too many chairs in the dining room and some should be removed. The two columns of tables were not being cleared of chairs on a daily basis and it was strongly felt that this initiative was not being supported by unit staff. New staff or weekend staff had not been informed of new arrangements. There was a suggestion that some chairs could be removed around each table rather than just from the two columns of tables.

ACTION: TM to ask DGi to liaise with Mediclean and catering staff.

TM/DGi

Cleanliness of showers and toilets on St George - It was acknowledged this had improved. The bin had also been replaced with a large bin as requested though it was noted that the replacement bin had a foot pedal, which was inappropriate. This was being attended to.

Water Dispenser – The arrival of the water dispenser in the Gym was welcomed. The Archery room dispenser was not yet in place due to plumbing problems. The Unit remained committed to this. There was an enquiry as to whether water dispensers would be placed on all wards. TM explained that if this was part of a Trust initiative, this would be the case but the NSIC had only made a commitment to put dispensers in the Gym and the Archery room.

Catering issues – Stuart Moysey, the Catering Manager, had indicated that he was imminently due to interview for an Evening Meal Hostess and would hopefully be in a position to start later-evening canteen meals. He regretted that he was unable to task the catering staff with cutting up patient's food. It was commented, however, that a number of patients had said many staff had actually voluntarily offered this service and this had been appreciated.

A request was made that a notice was displayed at the entrance to the canteen of the lunchtime and evening menu. It was also flagged that there is a significant discrepancy between wards of inpatient access to hot meals from the canteen, with some wards arranging for a hot meal to be collected for a patient, which can result in a very limited option for patients arriving towards the end of meal times.

It was noted that non-Halal food was available in the canteen.

It was raised whether the Trust was committed to being part of the Better Hospital Food Programme.

A patient had enquired as to why sausage rolls and pasties had recently been removed from the menu – apparently these had been too popular!

ACTION: DGi to discuss catering issues with Stuart Moysey. TM to write to John Blakesley regarding the Better Hospital Food programme.

DGi/TM

Internet access – A request had been made to the Trust IT Department to ask if they could provide internet access for patients. They were unable to offer this service. Following the SIA contact with BT, the NSIC had now formally approached BT and the unit was looking to install 4 internet points within OT, and a similar number in the dining room. Detail needed to be looked into to ensure that these were secure and were not monopolised by a small group of people.

Availability of Patient Forum Minutes – These would now appear on the SIA website until a Buckinghamshire Hospital Trust website was established.

Dining Room Plans – Sir Jimmy Savile had discussions with a catering firm to explore the balance of having a service available in the evening between eg 6.00 pm and 10.00 pm, keeping WRVS and also allowing the Catering Department to serve lunchtime and evening meals. The private catering firm did not feel that a limited, 6.00 – 10.00, service was viable on its own. They also requested clarity as to whether Sir Jimmy Savile or the Trust Management were leading this development. TM felt that there would a very significant gain for patient's to have a coffee bar running eg 10.00 am to 10.00 pm even if

this conflicted with current working arrangements. This was generally supported.

ACTION: TM to discuss further with Sir Jimmy Savile and DGi.

TM/DGi

Reconfiguration – Ray Fields, the Chairman of the Communications Group, presented a brief update of the reconfiguration. He stressed that the phased approach to the reconfiguration did not mean a delay but was intended to lead to a smoother implementation. The target for reconfiguration remained 4th October.

Access to Stadium – It was highlighted that there was no sign posts to show spinal patients how to get through the Stoke Mandeville site to the stadium. This was widely supported.

ACTION: TM to write to John Summers

TM

Call Button in MRSA Side Wards – It was highlighted that the light indicating the call button had been pressed was inside the room and not in the corridor and, hence, staff were not aware that a call button had been activated. It was asked whether this could be attended to.

ACTION: DGi

DGi

Car Parking – It had been flagged that families of recently injured patients were having to pay significant amounts on car parking. It was pointed out that there was already a mechanism to circumvent this. By speaking directly with the Car Parking office a monthly ticket could be purchased at a significantly reduced rate. It was noted that this issue, and other issues for example access to physiotherapy through outpatients, were not well publicised. It was agreed that a leaflet be produced for recently injured patients highlighting information such as car parking, local maps, useful telephone numbers and other basic information. Both Psychology and Discharge Co-ordination departments were already looking into this issue. It was felt that a separate booklet might be kept on each ward detailing services available for patients. This should also be put on an internet site for the NSIC when available. There were already in existence some leaflets which partly addressed this on St Joseph ward and in OT.

ACTION: DT to take further and bring back to next meeting.

DT

Seating Clinic – It was highlighted that there was a very long wait for attendance at the seating clinic. DT explained that this had been started from charitable funds but had now been taken up as part of the general service and had been taken up by Therapy. There was no mechanism to expand this service but its value was noted.

Early Calls for Patient Bowel Management – It was noted that whilst patients were encouraged to adopt their own routines as they would in the community, many patients were being called as early as 5.00 am for bowel management. It was pointed out that those who were independent could generally choose their own time, but with reduced staffing it was necessary for those who required help to be phased throughout the morning and hence the early start.

Shower Trolley Pillows – The shower trolley pillow on St David was still missing and wasn't able to be replaced. It was commented on the ward that there was not an appropriate budget to replace this from.

DGi

ACTION: DGi to address

Toilet Heights – A patient had written to indicate that many of the toilets within the NSIC were at the wrong height for conventional self-propelled shower chairs. This was confirmed by many patients though it was also noted that there were toilets of different heights throughout the building and these were coded.

DT

ACTION: DT to clarify the coding system and location of all types of toilets.

WAMDSAD – Ray Fields, the Chairman of the Communications Group, informed the meeting that, in his capacity as Director of Sport to the Windsor ,Ascot and Maidenhead District Sports Association for the Disabled (WAMDSAD), he had proposed that the Association should develop closer ties with the NSIC. This had been fully endorsed by the Board and plans were in hand for an initial event in the autumn. (In 2001 WAMDSAD was voted the top sports club for the disabled in the UK. And in 2002 it was voted second of all sports clubs. The current newsletter, 'Grapevine' is available in the Sports Therapy Room.)

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 8th October at 6.30 pm in the NSIC Dining Room