

STOKE MANDEVILLE HOSPITAL
NATIONAL SPINAL INJURIES CENTRE

PATIENTS' FORUM

Notes of meeting held on Thursday 14th October 2004
at 4.00pm in NSIC Seminar Room 2

Present: Mrs Jackie Bailey – Patient Representative
Dr Tom Meagher (Chair) – Clinical Director
10 patients

Apologies: Mr David Griffiths – General Manager
Sr Debbie Green – Head Nurse [Matron]

ACTION

1.0 Minutes of the Meeting of 12th August 2004

There were no requests for amendments. These minutes were accepted.

2.0 Smoking in the NSIC

Dr Meagher apologised on behalf of the Centre that the smoking shelter had not yet arrived. This was not due to arrive until 28th October. In the interim (until the smoking shelter is erected) it would be permitted to smoke outside the front doors. It was requested that extra bins be put in place – TM would arrange this. It was also commented that up until now the signage for no smoking in this area was completely inadequate and this frequently caused visitors embarrassment when asked to stop smoking. TM acknowledged this and commented that signage had been ordered but had also not arrived in a timely fashion.

Action: Notices to be put on wards and on the Patient Forum notice board indicating that smoking would be permitted outside the front doors. DGi to ensure bins for cigarette ends were put in the area.

DGi

3.0 Alcohol in the Centre

TM informed the meeting that there continued to be a regular number of incidents where patients were becoming intoxicated and abusive to members of staff. This made conditions for those working in the Centre extremely difficult and the long term affects on the moral of staff could lead to some staff leaving the NSIC. He suggested that it might be timely to consider a total alcohol ban within the Centre as in such spinal centres as Glasgow. There was a strong and unanimous opinion from the floor that this was a very small number of patients causing difficulty in the Centre and the Centre should deal with these patients firmly rather than apply a blanket ban. There was strong support for a zero tolerance policy.

4.0 **Patient Committee Update**

Jackie explained to the meeting that the Patients Committee were an interim group from a broad background including both relatively recently injured patients, patients with long standing injuries and representing other patient groups. The Group provided an interface between management and patients and represented patients on committees including the policy forming committee and undertook to also attend the Patient Forum.

Psychology Support – JB informed the meeting that Psychology had offered open access support following the recent death of a patient. She asked that she be informed if there were any problems gaining easy access and she would feed this back to management.

Evening Meals: Changing of Set Menus - The Committee had learned that there was quite a wide variety of set menus and the current rotation of menus through a two week rota could be changed. She asked that any volunteers who wished to form a group and evaluate this change in menus were welcome to get in touch with her.

5.0 **Snack Boxes**

Patients were free to request a snack box which could contain up to three snacks. This was available to all.

6.0 **Cleanliness in the Centre**

A new supervisor, Isabelle Fernandez, had been appointed to the Centre. TM expressed hope that this would result in a significant improvement in the current situation. There was general unhappiness expressed with the state of the courtyard between St George's and St David's – patients regularly had to resort to cleaning the yard as both nursing staff and cleaning staff felt this was not in their brief.

Action: DGi

DGi

7.0 **Day Rooms**

Plans had just been submitted, through Emily Leyden, following the patients meeting, to David Griffiths and he was putting these out to tender. Some funding was available for the refurbishment and hopefully this would come within the quote.

It was noted that the state of the day rooms was not good and these had not been cleaned since they were closed to smokers. As there would be many weeks until they were refurbished and the weather was now poor it was asked that they have a once off clean so that they could be used. TM thought this reasonable.

Action: DGi to arrange.

DGi

8.0 **Dining Room Refurbishment**

Tenders for the work would be submitted by the end of October. It was still hoped that the work would take place through January. This would require that the dining

room would be completely closed for approximately six weeks and hence the need for completing the work in the day rooms.

9.0 Paediatric Ward and New OT Area

Sir Jimmy Savile had formally handed these over to the Trust this week. TM commented on the very high quality of work. Both the Children's Ward and the OT Area would make a tremendous improvement to the NSIC. The Paediatric Ward needed to be equipped and have some other minor works done by the Trust and it was hoped that these Units would open in early November.

10.0 MRSA

Following the last meeting information had been placed on the Patient Forum notice board showing MRSA incident rates. TM noted that while acknowledging it remained a major problem, Stoke Mandeville Hospital Trust had a very good rating when compared with other hospitals in terms of incidents and prevalence. It was still felt that hand washing was an issue – it was suggested that doctors on the ward rounds set an example through hand washing. TM commented that all staff should do this but also noted that if there was no contact between staff and a patient during a round hand washing was not actually necessary.

11.0 Patient Education

Unfortunately the recent appointee, Karen Palmer, had decided not to continue after a couple of weeks in post. There was general disappointment at this. It was commented that she had arranged a number of very good lectures which had been appreciated. It was re-emphasised that MRSA education was fundamental as part of this programme. TM reminded those present that comments had been made that a spinal cord injured person might apply for this post – he welcomed any applications from spinal cord injured patients though noted also that whoever would get this post would do so on merit.

12.0 Washing Machine Replacement

This had been replaced. It was requested that instead of having a separate wash for MRSA patients that a separate machine was funded. TM felt this might not be appropriate but would look into how the separate wash was conducted.

Action: Debbie Green

DGe

13.0 Wheelchairs

It was noted that the current wheelchair technician had resigned. This left current difficulties with servicing of chairs. It was also noted that there were insufficient chairs for all patients. TM was aware that a bid for approximately 30 chairs had been made to the Trust was unclear as to where this bid currently stood. He would ask through Therapies.

Action: TM to discuss with Julia Mee, Head of Therapies.

TM

14.0 Preparing of Patients on St David Ward for Getting to Early Appointments

It was noted that many appointments were at 9.30am but patients were only being

prepared at 9.00am and this made it almost impossible to stick to schedules. It was also noted that other patients were being woken and got up at an earlier time when they had no appointments. It was asked if the rotas for getting patients up could be looked at.

Action: DGe to discuss with nursing staff.

DGe

15.0 Garden Areas

The general state of garden areas was commented on. It was also noted that there were very few areas which were not predominately concrete and for those patients here for six to nine months the presence of a garden area is particularly therapeutic. TM commented that the maintenance of the site was stretched. Initiatives such as raised beds were being encompassed in the area outside the new OT ward and Deborah DeMill volunteered to look into seeing if something more creative might be done.

Action: TM to discuss with DDM

TM

16.0 Mirrors in the Centre

It was noted that there was a great lack of mirrors within the Centre. These would be particularly helpful for tetraplegic patients. Specifically St David and St George wards could use full length mirrors.

Action: DGe to discuss with ward staff.

DGe

17.0 Patient Communication

Many patients commented that much of the information on notice boards was out of date and also that there were too many notice boards. These needed regular update and review.

Action: DGe and DGi to review.

DGe/DGi

18.0 Donation

TM was pleased to announce that Barclays had donated £500 to the Centre. This would be used to decorate the Patient Education Area.

19.0 Recruitment of Therapy Staff

Concern was expressed of the long hiatus between therapy staff leaving the Centre and employing another post.

Action: TM to discuss with Julia Mee, Head of Therapies.

20.0 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 9th December 2004 at 6.30pm.