

Our Ref: 18571

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1 June 2009

Dear ██████████

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales visit to Plas Coch Independent Hospital

I write to provide feedback following the routine visit undertaken by HIW's Mental Health Act Reviewer ██████████ to Plas Coch Independent Hospital. The visit was announced and carried out over 3 days during 30 April 09 to 4 May 09. The Reviewer was accompanied by ██████████ of Healthcare Inspectorate Wales.

The Reviewer interviewed 16 ██████████ patients, either in private sessions or in group meetings. The Reviewer also examined nine sets of patient's records. The Reviewer met with the majority of staff on duty during the visit. Other than the individual issues raised in the Action Plan below, the documents revealed some areas of good practice. All staff commented on the positive support that was provided by the Mental Health Act administrator. Entries in the case records evidenced meetings with nurses and regular review by the Responsible Clinician along with timely Care Programme Approach meetings and reviews.

Staff were very open in raising their concerns along with their achievements. It was evident that the staff experienced a high level of satisfaction whilst working with the patients. The Reviewer would particularly like to comment on the achievements of the Health Care Assistant at reaching levels 3 and 4 NVQ. The commitment to continued learning and improvement of care was evident from observation and discussions with staff. The trained staff who have been depleted in numbers of late and are expected to lead the changes and were particularly stretched and stressed. However they are highly committed to the patient group and to giving and maintaining high standards of care. The issues and concerns they raised are detailed below in the Action Plan.

During the patient interviews, the patients spoke generally with fondness for the staff and the care they received. The patients raised a number of issues; these have been detailed below in the Action Plan.

The Reviewer was pleased to note that physical examination on admission and ongoing review of each patient will be undertaken by a new Medical Officer. The Reviewer will be satisfied to observe the evidence of this during the next visit.



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The Reviewer would also note the good practice in use of blinds to ensure confidentiality on white boards.

Our Reviewer was concerned about a number of issues arising during her visit. These are outlined below, along with the actions HIW requires from the organisation.

Ligature Points

- Many ligature points were observed in every ward.

Action Required

HIW urgently recommend that ligature points in every ward should be identified and risk assessed with prioritised and dated action plan put in place.

Staff Issues

- It was noted by the Reviewer that staff were not always in attendance at meal times in the patients' dining room, thereby missing the opportunity of observing food intake, advising on healthy choices, modelling appropriate eating habits, as well as resulting in a lack of general observations.

Action Required

HIW would suggest that ward staff should look at how patients' meal times are used, not only as a physical requirement but as an opportunity for other interventions.

- Staff at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] level expressed concerns with regard to the structure as distributed in early April. They expressed concern regarding transferring clinical issues to non clinical staff. The Reviewer was told that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were diminished.

Action Required

HIW request that managers inform HIW and staff at Plas Coch the lines of both clinical and managerial responsibility, including on call arrangements.

- HIW are concerned that the [REDACTED] Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check had not been received prior to the commencement of [REDACTED] role.

Action Required

HIW request that information on all new starters since March to the state and date of their CRB checks and can the manager confirm that all other staff, including Bank and Agency staff have up to date CRB checks.

- The Reviewer had serious concerns regarding safe levels of staffing, particularly of trained staff, and the extremely high level of bank and agency staff that is evidenced from staff time sheets and agency printouts. Continuity of staff has been compromised; resulting in inter-staff and staff-patient relationships becoming difficult. Both staff and patients spoke of difficulty in giving and receiving aspects of care.

Action Required

HIW would suggest that the managers review and implement an action plan to ensure appropriate staff levels are put in place.

- The Reviewer was told that there had been no psychology services since February. Many patients and staff raised their concerns about the lack of psychology services.

Action Required

HIW would suggest the Managers should immediately address this issue so that patients' identified needs can be met as outlined in their care plans.

- The Reviewer was informed that the Social Worker is employed on a temporary contact,

Action Required

HIW request to be informed when the post is to be permanently filled.

- Many of the staff that the Reviewer met expressed their deep concerns at the tremendous amount of change where they feel they have had little opportunity to have their views listened to. Given the client group, consideration needs to be given to ensuring the correct gender balance exists at all levels of the organisation.

Action Required

HIW would suggest that managers consider this and review how the concerns of staff can be assured and their professional and personal views listened to and valued.

- [REDACTED] staff [REDACTED] voiced concerns that the way change has been managed has had a negative impact on staff's morale and their feeling of being valued.

Action Required

HIW request that the managers inform HIW how this is to be put right/changed.

Patient Issues

- Some patients' files are in poor condition with an abundance of information that was often not easy to access.

Action Required

HIW would suggest that managers and Mental Health Act administrators review patients' files with clinical staff and consider ways of improving access to accurate information and date order legal papers.

- Welsh Assembly Government ethnicity codes are not always used in describing the patients' ethnicity and sometimes different codes for ethnicity, language and religion are being used by staff.

Action Required

HIW would suggest that Mental Health Act administrators should review all codes used on the information sheet and ensure appropriate codes are used and made available to trained staff.

- [REDACTED] patients expressed concern that they were not often able to speak their first language.

Action Required

HIW would suggest that managers review the needs of these patients and care plan accordingly.

- [REDACTED] patients raised concerns at the attitude adopted towards them by some agency staff, the Reviewer advised the patients to ensure that the regular staff in charge were informed.

Action Required

HIW request to know how they can be assured the standards are maintained by the casual staff.

- Some patients expressed concerns regarding leave, specifically the availability of drivers to achieve planned leave and the insufficient number staff to facilitate leave.

Action Required

HIW request that managers inform us how they intend to ensure patients prescribed leave is maintained.

Unit Development

- The Reviewer was told of initial plans in the development of 'Lifespan' unit.

Action Required

HIW request to be informed of detailed plans including patient type, staffing, policies, etc.

I would appreciate a response to the issues raised by **3 July 2009**; I will be sharing our findings and your response with the Independent Healthcare Team within Healthcare Inspectorate Wales.

I would like to thank the ward manager and those members of the clinical team for their help and assistance during the visit. I would also like to thank you for your ongoing co-operation and help in working with us to continuously improve the care and service provision to your patients.

Yours Sincerely,



Review Service for Mental Health