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22 AUG 2011

Darlington Memorial Hospital
Hollyhurst Road
Darlington
DL3 6HX
Tel 01325 743757

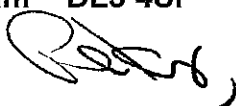
Our Ref: SE/LR/JS/KAS

18th August 2011

Private and Confidential

Mr Peter Irving
Chairman
County Durham LINK
Pioneering Care Centre
Carers Way
Newton Aycliffe
County Durham DL5 4SF

Dear Mr Irving



Enter & View Report: Outpatient Department, University Hospital North Durham

Thank you for the Outpatient Report which was completed following a visit by the County Durham LINK Enter & View Group on 4th May 2011.

The Trust has taken the recommendations suggested very seriously, and actions have been developed as a result of your findings.

I have outlined below, the actions we have progressed in order to ensure patients receive a positive experience when visiting our hospitals:-

External ramp – gradient too steep

It is not possible to reduce the gradient without significant civil engineering works, which in turn, will increase the length of the footpath used to access this entrance. We believe a better solution would be to direct wheelchair users to the main ground floor entrance which is on a level gradient, and ensure appropriate signage is provided to direct people to the lifts. We therefore propose to arrange signage to accommodate this proposal. This will be actioned by the Estates Department, by the end of August 2011.

Hand gel dispensers to be filled on a regular basis

Wards and department managers will ensure the dispensers are regularly checked and filled where appropriate.

This is to be actioned across the Trust with immediate effect.

Payphone is too high

The payphone will be lowered.

This is to be actioned by the Trust by the end of August 2011.

Information about LINK to be given to staff within the Department

LINK information booklets have been distributed to the Outpatient Departments.

This has been actioned by the Patient Experience Team, with immediate effect.

No seating at resting places

The seating was removed after an incident of vandalism. Pending funding arrangements, the seats will be replaced.

To be actioned by the Estates Department, aiming for completion by the end of September 2011.

More space required for wheelchair users in the waiting areas

A review will be undertaken, to see if additional space can be created to accommodate wheelchairs without compromising the number of chairs needed. Where feasible, chairs will be removed or realigned to create space.

This will be actioned by the Estates and Departmental Manager with immediate effect.

Signage to Orthopaedic Outpatient Department

The department is clearly signposted within the hospital; however we will arrange to improve the existing signage to avoid patients going to the main outpatient's reception.

Further issues were highlighted in your report which we have acknowledged and actioned:

Patient's were not told how long they would have to wait, or given an explanation about any delays

It is our standard to inform patients of any delays after a 30 minute wait. Staff will be reminded of the importance of keeping patient's up to date of any delays.

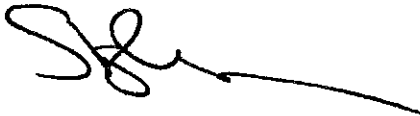
Staff did not always advise patients who to contact if they were worried about their condition

Contact details of specialist nurses, for example, are provided if relevant. This aspect of care will be looked into closely to adopt a consistent and acceptable approach throughout the outpatient department.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your visit and the observations made by your team. The findings are most helpful, and we are grateful to your team for their professional approach throughout their visit.

I am aware the Enter and View Group will be supporting more services across County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation trust, and I welcome their findings in the near future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SE', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephen Eames
Chief Executive