

ITEM 6

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums

PPI Forums were set up by the Department of Health throughout England at the end of 2003 to enable local residents to influence the day-to-day operations of their health services. There is a PPI Forum for every Trust in order to bring the patient's perspective into Trust management and decision-making. The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) was established to set up and monitor the Forums, and Forum Support Organisations (FSO) have been set up to support the Forums in their day-to-day operations and help promote the work of the Forums in the community they represent. The PPI Forums are independent of the NHS and have legal powers to enable them to carry out their work.

The Forums are made up of volunteer members of the public and recruitment is ongoing. No previous experience or expertise of health is required, just a commitment and desire to improve health services. The commitment is 2-3 hours a week and all out of pocket expenses are paid. There is an optional rolling training programme covering hospital inspections to working with the media. In a typical month Forum member may find themselves meeting health professionals, finding out local people's views and increasing their knowledge of health services in the area.

Central Derby PPI Forum

Central Derby Forum members are making progress on a number of projects. The Forum is working with Greater Derby PPI Forum, GP Practices and the Primary Care Trust to encourage GP Practices to set up their own Patient Participation Groups. On Friday, 22nd July the Forum visited the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary to give out questionnaires about the new Hospicom system offering services such as television, telephone and internet to patients at their bedside. The Forum wants to make public the real costs and implications of this system, particularly for bed bound patients and will produce a report of their findings.

Greater Derby PPI Forum

Making GP appointments is a hot topic for people in Derby. The Forum is gathering the views of local people and will meet with the PCT to consider how the Forum and the PCT can work together to gather the views of the public with the aim of improving the system. Waiting lists for community based services for children such as occupational and speech therapy have spurred the Forum to produce a questionnaire for parents and carers. The Forum is working with providers of these services and hopes to produce a report summarising the views of users of the services. By the end of August the Forum aims to produce a report of their findings on resources for substance abuse. To date it appears that a lack of funding and resources for alcohol services is the main area of concern.

Both Central and Greater Derby Forums are developing good working relationships with the PCT and are involved in the consultation processes for new LIFT project primary care centers.

Derby Hospitals

The Derby Hospitals Forum will continue, during 2005, to monitor the cleanliness of the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary and the City Hospital.

Patient Questionnaires – “To Help You We Need Your Help” have now been completed and the Forum members will be visiting three wards at the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary and three wards at the City Hospital in September 2005 to ask patients to complete the questionnaires.

The Forum has previously undertaken PEAT inspections at the Hospitals. One Forum member is on the Patient Experience Group and attends the meetings.

The Forum meets with the Patient & Public Involvement Lead of the Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust every three months and this meeting is a question and answer session. The Forum receives updates from the PPI Lead on the services they are monitoring eg MRI Scanner waiting times, Diabetes Services, the Neonatal Unit and the usage of the drug Herceptin for breast cancer.

Derbyshire Mental Health Services

The Forum has continued to engage with the public to find out their concerns. They are proactive in holding meetings in public around the county resulting in issues being identified to them for investigation.

At the September meeting homeless housing providers informed the Forum about difficulties gaining access to health and mental health services for homeless people. Since then the Forum has initiated a conference to be held in October 2005. This will bring together health service professionals and housing providers to find a way to address the gaps in service provision. This will hopefully mean that when workers notice a client's mental health deteriorating that working protocols will be developed to enable clients to get early intervention and support.

In response to a newspaper article the Forum carried out an inspection of a Dementia ward. The article displayed photographs that showed concerning conditions. The Forum found that these were out-of-date and that present facilities had been transformed.

The Forum is also campaigning against the government proposals to abolish mental health and learning disability PPI Forums. They believe that by merging the Forums into PCT areas that the focus on mental health may be lost and the scope to monitor the service provision will be reduced.