Assessing and meeting patients’ needs

Assessing the needs of our patients ensures that they receive the right individual care, support and treatment that they need. This includes everything from an initial assessment when they first come in to hospital to continual assessments throughout their whole hospital stay. We have made a number of improvements in assessing and meeting the needs of our patients.

Extended visiting

We have extended the visiting times on our wards to benefit patients, families, friends and carers. We wanted to make visiting times less restrictive for those who may have previously been unable to see a friend or loved one.

The extended times (varying on wards from 1.30-7.30pm or 2-8pm) mean patients, visitors and carers have more opportunities to liaise with doctors, nurses and therapists about their care. Families and carers are also able to assist patients at meal times if they wish to, with support from hospital staff.

Protected mealtimes, aimed at ensuring patients can eat without being interrupted, still apply on hospital wards. Visitors are politely requested to respect this time unless they are supporting feeding.

Alison Pressage, Senior Nurse for the Elderly Care Directorate, said: “Patients may not always understand what their treatment entails, but having someone they know on hand to offer help and encouragement will no doubt aid their recovery and improve their morale, and ensure relevant family members are involved appropriately in the recovery plans.”

New platted meal service for patients.

Patients on our wards are now able to choose what they would like to eat just 90 minutes before it is served without the risk of their food of choice running out. Instead of food being served from catering trolleys on the wards, meals are now pre-plated in the hospital kitchens and stored in heated units before being delivered.

Ellen Bull, Deputy Director of Nursing at the hospital Trust, said mealtimes are a vital part of a patient’s recovery: “Trials with the new plated meal service were well received, and we are hoping that patients will review this improvement positively, ensuring meals provided are hotter and more timely.”

We have also expanded the number of volunteer meal time assistants who support our patients.

Bay nursing improves patient communication

Bay-based nursing stations have been introduced on all of our medical and care of the elderly wards at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital providing a greater nurse presence and reducing patient anxiety.

A nurse is allocated to each bay on the ward at the start of each shift. That nurse is responsible for the delivery of care to those patients (up to seven patients and supported by a health care assistant) for the duration of their shift.

The nursing stations are stocked with materials based on the acuity and needs of the patients on that bay. This leads to more effective nursing by ensuring they have the right equipment to hand.

The nurse becomes the expert on those patients in that bay and is able to support doctors’ ward rounds. They can provide more proactive, consistent and timely individual care and improved communication between staff, carers and families.

Staff nurse, Bridget Bush from Ward 17, said: “It has improved communication between staff and patients and is more efficient. I love it. It is simple but effective and has made such a difference.”

Did you know?

- Emergency patients being admitted to our Acute Medical Unit are now seeing a consultant physician within an average of five hours of their arrival, compared to 12 hours a year ago.

The improvement in times is down to extending the week day working hours of consultants by a further three hours so they can continue to visit patients up to 10pm. This means more patients are seen and assessed earlier allowing staff to prioritise treatment.

- Preventing hospital acquired pressure ulcers is essential for the safety of our patients. we have launched a new prevention and management programme for all of our wards. Pressure Area Care Together (PACT) includes guidance for staff, monthly updates on the number of incidents as well as success stories, new initiatives and any training opportunities. We are providing additional wound care and pressure ulcer prevention training for ward staff and ward sisters are carrying out twice weekly pressure ulcer ward rounds