

## **Update following publication of the external report into how we involve families in investigations following a death**

The report stressed that the Trust should work with families and service users to respond to its recommendations ensuring that their needs and experience were at the heart of the trust processes, ways of working and ensuring best use of resources.

Throughout December, January and early February, wide engagement has taken place with voluntary sector groups, service user groups, families and carers groups. These include, but are not limited to, Health Watch, Carers Together, Hampshire Parent Carer Network, Red Lipstick Foundation, Patient Participation Groups in primary care, Action Hampshire, Southampton Consult and Challenge Group, service user groups, Carers in Southampton, and Trust members. At the request of some people, individual contact has been made, either by telephone or by 1 to 1 meetings, with 18 individual service users or relatives.

As referred to in the previous update, we have now held two workshops. Relatives and service users attended. An update was given on what we have done already, and then focused on two specific areas where feedback thus far has indicated what we need to improve as a priority. These topics were staff training in the Duty of Candour and information given to relatives following a serious incident.

The engagement to date has led to a number of people and organisations saying they want to work with the Trust to help us to improve things and continue to develop positive working relationships.

Our progress to date includes:

- The policy for investigations into serious incidents being reviewed by people working with us, who wish to be known as 'Experts by Experience' i.e. people who have, or may have, had experience of an investigation.
- Feedback gained from the workshops and 'Experts by Experience' is shaping a new information leaflet for families.
- Developing staff training in the Duty of Candour with 'Experts by Experience'.
- Role descriptions of the Investigating Officer and Commissioning Manager within the investigation process have been reviewed and updated, and now include clear expectations for patient and family involvement.
- A Family Liaison Officer is now in post and is in regular liaison with some families
- Initial discussion and work with carer and other groups to develop a set of guiding principles (known in some areas as a Carer's Charter) to support recognition of the value relatives can add to the care of their loved one.
- A change to the OpenRiO system (our electronic health record) has been requested, to make the recording of next of kin details a mandatory field. Performance is being tracked and services have set improvement targets for recording this information. This is being reported and monitored at the Trust Executive Group weekly meeting.

The first recommendation in the report was that the Trust recognises family involvement begins with the first patient contact. This is a broad recommendation and the above engagement has identified some emerging themes. These will be the basis of a strategy to ensure meaningful and

timely family involvement. The following themes have come through some service user's and families reporting positive experiences as well as those who have described when and how things have gone wrong or could be done differently. The themes are:-

- Clear information for families about the service and how they will be involved. This should include a clear explanation of what information can and cannot be shared about their relative and his/her care – addressing issues of consent.
- Seeing the family or carer or significant person (e.g. partner) of the patient as someone who has important information about the patient, and who can support them in their recovery. Involvement in the patients care plan was viewed as essential in supporting the patients and staff to make progress. Families voiced that they were also 'experts by experience' and had valuable contributions to make.
- Openness, honesty and listening are important ways that staff can develop a positive and constructive relationship with families.
- Signposting to information. Feedback has shown that people would value more information about peer or support groups, together with information about the diagnosis, medication and where to get other support. Feedback to date has told us this needs to be offered in a timely way but with recognition that not all people want the same information at the same time.

We are collating the feedback from this work with the themes from the Clinical Services Strategy engagement work and other feedback opportunities e.g. individual's comments, complaints etc, to ensure that future plans are coherent and take account of the different ways we are receiving feedback.

### **Next Steps**

Through the Patient Experience, Engagement and Partnership strategy, which is currently in draft form and being informed by service users, groups and staff, we will describe how we will continue to involve people. This will include measures to assess whether we are improving care experiences. Involvement of people who are 'Experts by Experience' will continue to be developed alongside developing stronger working relationships with the wider community.

We will work with service users, families and staff to develop information for families and staff which addresses the issue of consent, how they will be involved and who they can contact. We will hold a further work shop on this important issue.

Tangible actions are being taken forward to drive a cultural shift to involve families from the very first patient contact.

We will collate feedback about involvement in services and investigations, and linking with the development of the Clinical Services Strategy, we will use this to finalise the action plan in response to the recommendations.

If you would like to be involved, or find out more about this important piece of work please contact Chris Woodfine, by email at [Chris.woodfine@southernhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:Chris.woodfine@southernhealth.nhs.uk) or telephone on 023 8087 4146 or 07771 388495.