

Focus on Patient Experience

NHS Trusts all over Kent come to Healthwatch regularly seeking guidance on how to involve patients, carers and families more constructively in their services.

Most of the Trusts have a Patient Experience Committee (PEC) which involves patients and is designed to involve people in the development and improvement of services, however each Trust experiences challenges to make this the most effective and representative group.

Healthwatch Kent offered to bring together leads from each of the NHS Trusts to facilitate a conversation and provide a platform for the Trusts to work together, share best practice and generate solutions.

What did we discuss?

We talked about how valuable good patient experience can be and what that looks like. We agreed positive patient experience would be:

- Joined up and integrated
- Provided constructive challenge
- Dynamic and responsive
- Inviting and engaging
- Part of everyday life, not a bolt on
- Inclusive and effective
- Involving the right people
- Maximising all the channels of feedback possible
- Focused

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We reviewed the channels available for patient feedback which include:

- Healthwatch feedback
- Friends & Family Tests
- National Surveys
- Complaints and PALS

- PLACE assessments
- Care Quality Commission Audits
- User groups and forums
- Social media

- Engagement activity
- Staff including hospitality & porters
- Volunteers especially receptionists
- Clinical Commissioning Groups and other partners

Key questions

We discussed key questions to ensure they maximise the potential of patient experience.

1. **Have you mapped your communities and who lives in your patch?**

5. **Where are the gaps?**

2. What relationships do you currently have with communities?

6. What relationship does your Patient Experience Committee have with your Governing Body? How would they describe your PEC?

3. **What channels do you have to gather patient experience/feedback?**

7. **How does the PEC help you in your role?**

4. What are you doing with that data?

8. Are you working with Healthwatch effectively?



What are the challenges? What is going to change?

All the Trusts involved in the discussion had different challenges, but most had common issues including

The challenges



All the Trusts involved in the discussion had different challenges, but most had common issues including:

- Need to build a different dynamic relationship with patients.
- Resource. Good engagement takes time and investment.
- How do you keep patients as patients and not institutionalise them?
- Focus and prioritise. Danger of too much listening and not enough changing.
- Need to work across organisations and patient pathways.
- Reluctance to challenge patients whose behaviour can damage the patient experience agenda.
- Patient experience is everyone's responsibility.

The changes



Each Trust who attended had different challenges and successes. However together we agreed some key principles for improving patient experience:

- Work across patient pathways with partner organisations to drive change.
- Seek patient feedback and stories proactively.
- Work together to map communities.
- Build a realistic approach to the Patient.
- Develop more co-design with patients and carers into their work.
- Embed principles of engagement and co-design across key stakeholders.

Next steps

Each attendee planned to take the learnings back to their own organisation to generate change. In addition, we agreed:

To reconvene in February. Maidstone Hospital offered a free venue.

Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells Trust to approach Kent & Medway Social Partnership Trust to discuss working together on a shared patient pathway.

Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells Trust planning to implement changes to their PEC starting with discussion at the December meeting.



All to discuss the role of patient experience within their relevant Integrated Care Partnerships.

East Kent Hospitals to explore the role of patients within their Patient Experience Committee.

And finally!

Thanks to everyone who joined us. It was an energetic and enthusiastic discussion recognising the value of good patient experience. We look forward to working with you all.

- Darent Valley Hospital
- Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells Trust
- Kent Community Trust
- Dartford Gravesham & Swanley Integrated Care Partnership
- East Kent Hospitals
- Kent & Medway Social Partnership Trust (mental health trust)