

Healthwatch update on end of life and palliative care services

Loweswater Suite – on Copeland Unit in WCH- visited August . Date requested and response awaited regarding next visit.

- The beds were being fully occupied at this time and the activity reports show how long patients may wait for admission. An update is awaited. Work was being done with the Acute Trust to try and ensure that referrals are made in a timely and appropriate manner.
- The nurse and medical consultant staff continue to provide cover for the suite. Concern remains at the unfilled palliative care consultant post for North Cumbria. Feedback on use of out of hours cover was positive at the time of our visit.
- Feedback from families continues to be very positive. I-pads are used for patients to give feedback and comment cards are available in patient rooms.
- Staffing levels continue to cause concern to the Healthwatch and RCN ambassadors and we await results of Prof. Keith Hurst's review which took place in late summer.
- Volunteers would be welcome – see separate information.

End of Life Care Operational and Workstream Groups for Cumbria

This group met in August just after the publication of the response to the enquiry into the Neuberger Review of the Liverpool Care Pathway (LCP)*. Statements have since been issued by both NHS England's Northern clinical networks team(1), and the combined clinical commissioning group, CHOC and CPFT(2). The overall message is that patients must 'continue to benefit from high standards of care at the end of their lives'. It was stressed that 'good communication is part of any transfer or handover of care.'(1) In terms of using the principles behind the LCP, this remains endorsed, and the use or otherwise of the actual documentation is left to discretion of individual teams. The intention is to 'support the ongoing delivery of compassionate, high quality care' and if teams wish to use the principles of the LCP but not the documentation, a checklist has been provided to ensure decisions are all fully documented in order that care can always be audited (2).

The groups will meet again in early December. The Workstream group also meets independently between joint meetings.

*'More Care, Less Pathway. A review of the Liverpool Care Pathway' DoH. July 2013

Deciding Right

Have you ever thought about what would happen to you or the person you care for if either of you became too poorly to speak for yourselves? There is a new framework being rolled out across Cumbria to help us think about just that, and it's called '**Deciding Right**'. It encourages health professionals to talk to us about the options available to help us make decisions in advance. It begins with a conversation between the person and the professional about their options. There are three 'facilitators' who are offering information and support to all health and social care professionals to let them know about the options and the documentation but are also able to come to meetings such as this and engage with public as well as professionals.

Please see www.cln-palliativecare.org and www.dyingmatters.org for more information.

It would also be very valuable to ask what information you might like to have access to on the Cumbria and Lancashire website on palliative care as it is currently being updated and your input would be very welcome. What would you like to find on here? Please contact Viv Stucke through Healthwatch if you have any suggestions and they will be passed to the group working on this.

Viv Stucke – End of Life Ambassador for Healthwatch – November 2013