

Ref: April16/GB Question

21st September 2016

Mrs Diane Walton

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Dear Mrs Walton

Questions submitted at the Governing Body meeting held in public on 30th April 2016

During its meeting held in public on 30th April 2016, the NHS Eastern Cheshire CCG Governing Body provided preliminary comments on the two questions you had submitted. It was confirmed that a written response would be provided.

I write to you today to provide the written response to your queries. I would like to apologise that this written response was not provided to you sooner.

Question 1

You asked: Regarding the Expert Patient Programme: "I have concerns regarding access to these courses run by Partnership Trust. They all run during the day. Do no people in employment have long-term health conditions? What percentage of the expert patient courses are run outside of working hours/day over the year? Surely it is in the interest of prevention and cost effectiveness to inform and support people at an early stage and therefore encourage an optimum lifestyle as the disease and age progress? I can possibly understand that the carers ones may be best during the day but not the others. I won't even ask given the venues if there is hearing aid access!"

At the April meeting, the Governing Body advised that a written response would be provided once the detail of the contract for the service and how it is commissioned was ascertained. NHS Eastern Cheshire CCG have therefore raised your queries with Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP), who currently provide the Expert Patient Programme to our patients.

CWP explained that the Expert Patient Programme is an accredited self-management course that is designed to help any person living with a long term physical and/or mental health condition gain control of their condition by encouraging lifestyle changes and developing self-confidence so they can enjoy what life has to offer.

The Expert Patient Programme consists of seven sessions that are delivered by past participants who are managing their long term conditions effectively. The Expert Patient Programme also delivers the 'Looking After Me' course that aims to support adult carers in maintaining their own health and wellbeing as well as breaking down the social isolation that some carers experience by allowing them to share their experiences with other carers.

At the current time the Expert Patient Programme sessions for Eastern Cheshire patients take place in Macclesfield on Mondays and Tuesdays between 10:30 to 13:00.

CWP acknowledged that these times are during working hours. CWP confirmed that they have previously delivered Expert Patient Programme Sessions during the evening in Crewe to assist patients with working commitments to attend the sessions. CWP explained that, at the current time, they are not aware of demand from patients in Macclesfield for the Expert Patient Programme sessions to be provided outside of working hours. However, if patients in Macclesfield did require this in the future, CWP would look to facilitate this.

With respect to your question about hearing aid access, CWP explained that if any Expert Patient Programme sessions are to be delivered in a building without a hearing loop built in, they do have access to a portable hearing loop that they would use to ensure that patients with hearing aids can attend the sessions. Should the portable hearing loop not be suitable for a patient, CWP would make suitable alternative arrangements.

I hope that this addresses your concerns about the Expert Patient Programme.

NHS Eastern Cheshire CCG recognises the important role that community wellbeing support can provide to our patients. As you may be aware, NHS Eastern Cheshire CCG is currently procuring a 'wellbeing wraparound hub' as part of the redesign of Primary Mental Health Services in Eastern Cheshire. It is expected that the 'wellbeing wraparound hub' will deliver self-management courses and support to patients who may require it in the future.

Question 2

You asked: With the expansion of services offered at GP surgeries to give equity across the CCG, particularly minor surgery, what Infection Control measures are being put /are in place. What training programme is there for GPs and what decontamination policy is in place? Does the CCG employ/have access to an Infection Control Specialist? Procedures carried out in GP surgeries do not have the full backing of the hospital system in terms of theatres. Any information that demonstrates to the public that the standards in hospital for surgery and infection control are equally as robust in GP surgeries would be good.

While initial comments were provided in response to this question at the April meeting, our Primary Care Commissioning Manager, Dean Grice, has reviewed your concerns and advised the following.

I would like to assure you that the expansion of services offered at GP surgeries, including minor surgery, is underpinned by a rigorous regulatory framework. All GP Practices are required to conform to the infection control standards set down by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). These standards are available from the CQC website which can be accessed at the following address: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/fundamental-standards> The CQC undertakes inspections across all health providers, ensuring that training and standards are adhered to, verifying the quality of the equipment and services in place, and ensuring patient safety.

To help achieve these national standards, all GP Practices will have a nominated Infection Control Lead and are expected to undertake an annual Infection Control audit to ensure they are compliant with the latest guidelines. GP Practices in Eastern Cheshire can also obtain support and expertise about Infection Control via East Cheshire NHS Trust's Infection Control Nurses.

In addition, as GP Minor Surgery is commissioned as an enhanced service, any GP Practice that wishes to provide Minor Surgery is required to satisfy the commissioners (NHS England and NHS Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group) that the Service Specification for the Minor Surgery Enhanced Service can be met. This includes ensuring that the GPs which undertake this work are adequately qualified and maintain the required level of training and competence.

In addition, any Minor Surgery procedure that is undertaken in GP Practices is carried out with single use instruments to mitigate the cross-contamination risk. Patients are also followed up after their Minor Surgery to allow the GP Practice to monitor for any infection. If a GP practice identifies an infection control issue, this would be investigated by the practice as a Significant Event.

I therefore hope that this information assures you that there are robust processes in place to ensure that GP Practices which undertake Minor Surgery meet the required Infection Control standards.

I hope that the above information addresses your two questions. However, please do not hesitate to raise any further questions you may have to the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Bowen', with a small comma at the end.

Dr Paul Bowen
Clinical Chair
NHS Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group