



**Enter & View Re-Visit  
Fern Ward  
Medicine and Elderly Care Ward  
King George Hospital**

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## Introduction

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham is the local independent consumer champion for health and social care. We aim to give our citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided for people in the borough.

Enter & View is carried out under the Health & Social Care Act 2012. It imposes duties on certain health and social care providers to allow authorised representatives of local Healthwatch organisations to enter premises and carry out observations for the purposes of Healthwatch activity.

Authorised representatives observe and gather information through the experiences of service users, their relatives/friends and staff to collect evidence of the quality and standard of the services being provided.

To do this we:

- Enable people to share their views and experiences and to understand that their contribution will help build a picture of where services are doing well and where they can be improved.
- Give authoritative, evidenced based feedback to organisations responsible for delivering and commissioning services.
- Are able to alert Healthwatch England or the Care Quality Commission, where appropriate, to concerns about specific service providers of health or social care.

## Summary

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham authorised representatives undertook an unannounced visit to speak with patients about three areas of care during their hospital stay: nutrition, personal hygiene and interaction between staff and patients. Representatives spoke to 8 Patients and 2 relatives on the day of the visit.

This was a re visit to look at whether the recommendations made were being implemented. Recommendations from the previous visit were:

- ***Catering staff distributing tea and coffee need to each individual patient and ask if they would like a drink. This is essential on an elderly ward, where patients could be confused and for those with hearing impairments.***
- ***Before leaving the ward, catering staff should ask those who may have been having a wash/gone to the toilet if they would like a drink.***
- ***All patients should be asked if they need help filling in the menus.***
- ***Staff need to double check that patient information boards display the correct information at the beginning of their shift.***
- ***Where patients are using a bedpan, staff need to wait for the individual to finish using the bedpan so they are not left waiting in a uncomfortable position longer then they need to.***
- ***All call buttons on the ward need to be checked to ensure they are in working order. If a call button is not working an alternative method needs to be provided to ensure the patient has a way of calling staff when they need to.***

Authorised representatives observed this was a positive re visit to Fern ward.

Overall improvements were seen across the ward, patients told representatives that the patient information boards consisted of the correct information, including the patients name and named nurse.

All call buttons were in working order and in reach of patients.

There were positive change in the way the catering staff disturbed drinks. Catering staff ask patients if they would like a drink from the entrance of the hallway, but also go closer to the patient if the patient does not respond. This ensures that patients do not miss having a drink. Although this is a positive step

for the ward, patients highlighted that catering staff distributing food and drink look unhappy and do not smile.

Areas highlighted for improvement include issues around incontinence items; one patient spoke of her experience and said she was left unattended for a long while, whilst being wet.

Most patients were satisfied by the choice of food, however for patients who need pureed food this is not the case and they felt there is no real choice.

### Details of the Visit:

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015

### Premises Visited:

Fern Ward, King George Hospital

### Enter & View Authorised Representatives:

Barbara Sawyer  
Val Shaw  
Manisha Modhvadia (Healthwatch Officer)

### Specific Areas Identified for Observation:

- Nutrition
- Personal Hygiene
- Patient Information Boards

### Purpose of the Visit:

To visit wards that provide in-patient hospital services for older people - to gather the views and experiences of patients about the services being provided to them. This was an unannounced re-visit to Fern ward to follow up the progress of an action plan agreed and put in place by BHRUT based on recommendations, put forward by Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham, from a previous visit to the ward.

## **The Ward's Services:**

The ward has 30 beds: split into 4 units with 6 bays each, set up as single sex units. There are 4 side rooms.

It is a medicine ward for elderly care.

Visiting times are from 10.30am till 7.30pm, and patients are provided with 2 cooked meals a day.

### **Staffing arrangements:**

**Morning:** 5 Qualified Nurses and 3 Health Care Assistants

**Afternoon:** 4 Qualified Nurses and 3 Health Care Assistants

**Evening/Overnight:** 3 Qualified Nurses and 2 Health Care Assistants

During the visit, the staff from the ward were very helpful and assisted by providing all information that was requested.

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to thank the staff for their assistance and co-operation during our visit.

On entering the wards, each one has a sink near the entrance to encourage visitors to wash their hands as well as use the alcohol hand rubs.

## **Patients' Experiences:**

During the visit, Healthwatch representatives spoke with patients and their relatives. Patients were representative of the various boroughs who use the services. Any changes implemented by the Trust would have an impact on all patients, irrespective of the borough they live in.

*Healthwatch recommendation from previous visit: Catering staff distributing tea and coffee need to visit each individual patient and ask if they would like a drink. This is essential on an elderly ward, where patients could be confused and for those with hearing impairments.*

Patients told us that the catering staff came to the doorway and were clear, if the staff member felt somebody did not hear they would approach the individual patient to ask if they wanted a drink. Although staff are not attending to each bay, responses highlight that improvements have been made.

*Healthwatch recommendation from previous visit: Before leaving the ward, catering staff should ask those who may have been having a wash/gone to the toilet if they would like a drink.*

There were no patients who mentioned that they had missed a drink.

*Healthwatch recommendation from previous visit: All patients should be asked if they need help filling in the menus.*

Patients who needed assistance told representatives that help was offered to fill in the menus. Three patients told Healthwatch representatives they received help, two patients said they did not need any help and one patient said they didn't need help but had seen other patients being assisted.

Furthermore in terms of choice, 5 patients said there was choice and were happy with what was on the menu, whilst 1 patient felt there was no choice. There were two patients and one relative who felt that there was choice, but the menu was not suitable for all, especially those who need pureed food.

*Healthwatch recommendation from previous visit: Staff need to double check that patient information boards display the correct information at the beginning of their shift.*

Representatives observed information boards above each bed. They all had the correct patient information, including the patients name, the date, the nurse and consultant who were treating the patient.

During the visit, all the patients and relatives we spoke to indicated that all the information on the information boards were correct at all times.

One relative said that the board had the correct information, but it was not adequately used for the benefit of the patient, especially in terms of pureed food.

Comment from relative “The board clearly states that my dad needs pureed food and which food he will eat, but for some reason the staff still give him pureed food from the menu options which of most he does not like and he has lost weight. This has played a part in his recovery”

***Healthwatch recommendation from previous visit: Where patients are using a bedpan, staff need to wait for the individual to finish using the bedpan so they are not left waiting in a uncomfortable position longer than they need to. During the previous visit concerns were also raised about incontinent items not being changed overnight.***

Majority (seven) of the patients did not raise any concerns in this area, however in one case a patient told us she had pressed the buzzer early hours of the morning and nobody came to assist her leaving them wet until breakfast time. A relative also mentioned that they had to tell a nurse twice that the patient needed changing. This highlights that there are still concerns in this area.

Comment from patient “One morning, I rang the buzzer and nobody came and then I rang it again and nobody came until it breakfast time, this was a long time and I was wet”

***Healthwatch recommendation from previous visit: All call buttons on the ward need to be checked to ensure they are in working order. If a call button is not working an alternative method needs to be provided to ensure the patient has a way of calling staff when they need to.***

At this visit seven patients commented that they did not wait long for staff to attend to them: this is apart from the case indicated above. Representatives also observed that the call buttons were in reach of the patients all were in working order.

## Additional information

### Nutrition:

- All patients said they were happy with the size of food portions .Seven patients said food was warm enough, apart from one patient who indicated their porridge for breakfast was cold by time it was given to them.
- Patients also highlighted that catering staff seem to look unhappy and did not smile.

### Comments:

*“You will be lucky if you see the staff smiling, the ones who give water and food”*

*“The food is fine”*

*“The lady with the drink never smiles”*

*“For me, the food is enough, you don’t like to eat that much when your not well”*

*“The food is sufficient”*

### Personal Hygiene:

- Overall, patients were satisfied with the way they were being cared for, six patients said they felt treated with dignity and two patients told us that it depends on the nurse.
- Patients (four) also told us they were offered help with having a bath or going to the toilet. One patient said his wife helped him and this is what he wanted and two patients said they did not need any help. Furthermore one patient told representatives that they are happy with the help they get.

### Comments

*“The staff support me to the toilet incase I fall”*

*“Whilst I have been very poorly, the nurses have washed me otherwise i get out of bed and they help me”*

*“I don’t need help and do everything myself, but I have seen the nurses help people”*

### **Staff interaction**

- During this visit patients told us they were happy with the staff. However issues were raised about the catering staff which has been highlighted above.

### **Comments**

*“Yes all staff treat me with respect”*

*“All very pleasant get the odd one that’s not nice”*

*“The nurse is lovely, she is sorting out something for me, so i can go home like a carer to come to my home to help me”*

*“Doctors speak to me about my medicine”*

*“The staff who give the food, I have never seen them smile, they dump the water jug and food and go”*

## **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Overall, Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham representatives felt this was a positive visit on returning to Fern Ward. Most of the recommendations put forward from the first visit have been put in place this is reflected in some of the feedback received from patients and their relatives.

Areas of improvements were found in terms of catering staff, overnight staffing arrangements and pureed food, therefore we recommend the following:

- **There are some areas of concern in terms of catering staff**, patients highlighted that catering staff do not smile; it was felt that they do not want to be there. The trust need to work with Sodexo to overcome this, ensuring this issue does not have a negative impact on patients.
- The trust need to relook at why patients are being missed to have their incontinent items changed during the overnight shift. The trust may want to look at overnight staffing arrangements.
- Pureed food is an area of concern; one relative felt that if she was not there the patient would not have eaten anything as although his preferences are known to the staff they seem to be forgotten. Nursing staff need to work with family members, the patient and sodexo staff so a specific menu is offered to those who need pureed food.