

Focus on Frank Lloyd Unit, Sittingbourne

Feedback from Carers

In December 2018, we were invited to visit the Frank Lloyd Unit at Sittingbourne Memorial Hospital to talk to a group of Carers who had loved ones at the Frank Lloyd Unit.

Frank Lloyd has 40 beds and is designed to support adults who have dementia or challenging behaviour that cannot be looked after in a nursing home.

We heard from 5 Carers who all had loved ones currently being cared for at Frank Lloyd. None of them lived locally and all were travelling to visit their loved ones.



What did we hear?

In Summary

- Carers were complimentary about the nursing staff and reception staff for being friendly and approachable
- They felt the care offered to their relatives was of a high standard but quality was starting to slip in recent months due to lack of staff
- The Carers group was valued and important to the people who attend it
- All the Carers we spoke to were involved in their relatives' care planning
- They reported that staff were leaving and not being replaced
- Only 10 beds were currently being used despite capacity for 40 patients. The Carers questioned why it was not better used
- The Carers' were under the impression that the Frank Lloyd unit would close shortly but had not had official confirmation from the Trust despite requests

What are we going to do with the feedback?

- We have shared everything that we have heard with the organisations that provide and commission services at Frank Lloyd
- We have asked commissioners to provide clarity to patients and their families about the future of the Unit

What Did Carers Tell Us?

The Positives

- All the carers we spoke to were complimentary about the care and attention provided by all staff, including the reception staff who always passed messages on or took messages as necessary
- Everyone felt the Carers group was an important tool for them giving them support in the knowledge that they are not alone with their problems and that they can be shared with another understanding person. "It is a brilliant idea."
- They greatly respected the input given by the Clinical Psychologist and were sad to see him going
- All were involved in their relatives care plan
- "It is clean and welcoming"
- "Staff are lovely and do a great job"
- "Care has been second to none"
- "My mother was being given drugs to keep her quiet in the Care Home but is much better now she is here. It took three months though to detox her"
- "Patients are happy"
- "There is instant access to other medical help if required, because we have the hospital attached"
- "They are so caring and patients are well looked after, but it is very noticeable that things are not as good as they were"
- "This unit offers Continuing Healthcare"

The Concerns

Quality of Care

- "Staff are leaving and not being replaced resulting in a deterioration in care in comparison with a few months back. You can't blame them because they all need a job"
- "The Clinical Psychologist is being moved and not being replaced"
- "Mother waited over an hour to go to the toilet because she needed two people to take her, and only one was available. Not long ago there would have been plenty of staff around to help straight away"

Challenges with the 'system'

- "I had to push for my son to be admitted because the eligibility criteria has been raised and it is so much more difficult to reach. His Parkinson's nurse managed to get him in, because he was near end of life"
- "I (and others) have never needed care from the system until now, when we can't afford it. We have applied for help, but it's all ticking boxes and the first question is, does your mother own her own home? It's all about how much money she has got"
- "The Trust doesn't tell us anything. Our mother was transferred from Littlebrook to here and we didn't know about it until we turned up for visiting at Little Brook that afternoon"
- "It is hard to know what Kent and Medway Partnership Trust are after. They wrote us a contradictory letter; are they offering us continuing healthcare or not?"

Uncertainty about the future and lack of information

- "The writing is on the wall for closure. Staff are moving and not being replaced, but where will the patients go? There isn't another unit in Kent like this one"
- Two of the carers had written to West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group seeking information about the future of the Unit, but had not received a response for 2 months. "The powers that be aren't interested, you never get a reply."
- "We were told in September that the funding was going to be stopped but we've had no information since"
- "This is a 40-bed unit but there are only 10 beds being used. You can't tell us there isn't a need for beds?"
- "My Mum came here from a care home because they couldn't care for her wide range of complex needs and she was transferred. Where could she go if Frank Lloyd shut?"
- "What is going to happen to future generations and their continuing healthcare?"

We have shared everything we heard during our visit with the providers and commissioners of this service along with the Care Quality Commission.