

## Opportunity to become a Patient Assessor Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE)

### Background

NHS England and the Department of Health recommend that all hospitals, hospices and independent treatment centres providing NHS funded care undertake an annual assessment of the quality of non-clinical services and condition of their buildings.

These assessments are referred to as patient-led assessments of the care environment (PLACE).

PLACE assessments look at:

- how clean the environments are
- the condition – inside and outside – of the building(s), fixtures and fittings
- how well the building meets the needs of those who use it, for example through signs and car parking facilities
- the quality and availability of food and drinks
- how well the environment protects people's privacy and dignity

Assessments are carried out every year by people who use the building – patients, relatives, carers, friends, patient advocates, volunteers or trust membership and trust Governors – supported by staff. The assessment will be organised by a member of staff known as the assessment manager, but the patient's voice is the one that matters most.

### What experience do I need?

Some recent personal experience of in-patient care is useful, although it is not essential. This could be as a patient, relative, carer, friend, patient advocate, volunteer or trust membership and trust Governor. You will be called a patient assessor even if you are not a patient yourself.

You should not act as a patient assessor if you are employed (or have been employed within the last two years) by the organisation you are assessing.

Age is no barrier to being a patient assessor. We'd welcome children and young people to get involved in reviewing our paediatric wards, and adults to review our adult inpatient wards.

### What knowledge do I need?

Patient assessors do not require any particular technical expertise or knowledge. What you need is the ability to understand and apply simple guidance, together with a common-sense, unbiased and practical approach.

## **What skills do I need?**

Patient assessors need to be able to gather information in a variety of ways, following a clearly defined checklist. You will need to be able to:

- ✓ communicate clearly with people
- ✓ listen actively and encourage people to talk about the site/building and its services
- ✓ be objective when assessing or gathering evidence
- ✓ participate in discussions
- ✓ present a point of view clearly but reasonably
- ✓ be open to the views of others
- ✓ contribute to a brief summary statement of what you saw.

## **What physical abilities do I need?**

Taking part in an assessment can be tiring. If you are not physically fit, we can adjust for this – perhaps by involving you in just a part of the assessment, or by providing a wheelchair.

If you have a disability, there may be parts of the assessment you cannot contribute to, but this does not mean you cannot be involved. If you are partially-sighted, for instance, your input will be particularly helpful in assessing how easy it is to find your way around the building.

## **How much time do I need to give and what will I be doing?**

You may be asked to participate in one or more assessments. Assessments can last from two to six hours on any day, depending on the size of the site. To ensure that you are fully prepared for the assessment, we will need you to take part in a one-hour training session prior to the assessment, which can take place either virtually or face to face.

Assessments may take place at:

- North Devon District Hospital
- South Molton Community Hospital
- Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital
- Tiverton Community Hospital
- Exmouth Community Hospital
- Sidmouth Community Hospital

You will help the team to agree a score for a number of things including cleanliness, décor, the quality and taste of food, and how the privacy and dignity of patients is provided for.

You will not be asked to make any judgements about how well clinical staff are doing their job, although if you see something that causes you concern you will be expected to draw attention to it either straight away or at the end of the assessment.

You will reach your own views about the scores to be applied, and these will contribute to overall judgements that the team will make.

Your travel expenses will be covered and free parking and refreshments will be provided.

### **What happens after the assessment?**

Some questions are specifically written for patient assessors only to answer. This is to make sure that the patient voice is strong and clear. At the end of the assessment, patient assessors will meet alone to answer the questions that relate only to you and complete a patient assessment summary sheet. The assessing team may complete more than one form, for example if the assessment takes place over two days, with different teams assessing different areas, then each team may complete a form. The patient assessors will also make recommendations for improvement.

PLACE information is used by a range of public bodies such as the Care Quality Commission, NHS England, the Department of Health, local clinical commissioning groups and local Healthwatch. All the results will be published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre and will be publicly available.

### **How do I find out more?**

If you are interested and would like to find out more, please get in touch.

Contact Claire in our facilities team at [c.padbury@nhs.net](mailto:c.padbury@nhs.net) or on 01271 311508.