

Bowel Care for Spinal Cord Injured Patients

Reference Number: RDF1176-23

Date of Response: 02/02/2023

Further to your Freedom of Information Act request, please find the Trust's response(s) below:

Q1. Does the Trust have a formal written policy for digital rectal examination, digital rectal stimulation and the digital removal of faeces in spinal cord injured and other patients with neurogenic bowel dysfunction?

Northern and Eastern Service answer:

No. All spinal patients' treatment is in accordance with the Bowel Care protocol pathway from the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment centre, Salisbury District Hospital, Salisbury.

Q2. Is your policy based on the policy template that the Spinal Injuries Association circulated to your Trust in August 2018?

Northern and Eastern Service answer:

Yes. All spinal patients follow Bowel Care protocol pathway from the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment centre, Salisbury District Hospital, Salisbury.

Q3. If admitted to the Trust, will a person with neurogenic bowel dysfunction receive the following bowel care intervention – Digital removal of faeces?

Northern and Eastern Service answer:

Yes. As per spinal protocol form Salisbury, all spinal patients are discussed with the region team on a weekly basis to ensure correct care is in place.

Q4. If admitted to the Trust, will a person with neurogenic bowel dysfunction receive the following bowel care intervention – Digital rectal stimulation?

Northern and Eastern Service answer:

Daily suppositories to aid bowel movement and routine are prescribed and given as per protocol- this is the only DRS (Digital rectal stimulation).

Q5. If admitted to the Trust, will a person with neurogenic bowel dysfunction receive the following bowel care intervention – Trans anal irrigation?

Northern and Eastern Service answer:

This intervention is not carried out in this care setting.

Q6. Do you have ward-based staff skilled in supporting patients with neurogenic bowel care interventions, including the digital removal of faeces?

Northern and Eastern Service answer: Yes.

Q7. Are staff available seven days a week to undertake these bowel care interventions?

Northern and Eastern Service answer:

Yes – this is a standard care pathway for our spinal patients if required, registered nurse undertake this intervention.

Q8. Does the Trust have a policy that allows for the personal care assistants/carers of spinal cord injured patients to assist with the bowel care element of the patient's care?.

Northern and Eastern Service answer:
The Trust follows the Salisbury Spinal protocol.

Q9. Does the Trust have an appropriate clinical lead in place (such as a Continence Manager) to manage the overall delivery of bowel care interventions to patients?

Eastern Service answer : The Trust has a Bladder and Bowel team.

Northern Service answer :- There is a surgical consultant available 24/7, but specialist nurses only on weekdays

Q10. What are the contact details for this clinical lead (i.e. name, job title, telephone number and email address)?.

The disclosure of staff names would breach the first data protection principle and fail to meet any of the relevant conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. The first principle in the DPA requires that disclosure must be fair and lawful, and, in particular, personal data shall not be processed unless at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is satisfied.

The staff concerned would not have expected their names to be disclosed in the public domain and so disclosure would not be 'fair' in the manner contemplated by the DPA. Furthermore, disclosure would not satisfy any of the conditions for data processing set out in Schedule 2 of the DPA. In particular, we do not consider that there is a legitimate interest in disclosure in this case.