

Nutrition & Hydration Task & Finish Group Sheffield Children's Hospital Visit Monday 3rd March 2014

Draft Report V00.02

1.0 Background

1.1 The Nutrition & Hydration Task & Finish Group is a sub group of the Healthier Communities & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

1.2 A public question was put to the Committee at its meeting on the 17th October 2012, raising concerns about the quality of hospital food in Sheffield. The Committee subsequently agreed to establish a working group to look at the quality of food as well as the support that people get to eat and drink whilst they are in hospital.

1.3 The original piece of work focussed on the Northern General Hospital, following which a report was produced and shared with the Trust. This report is available at www.sheffield.gov.uk/scrutiny

1.4 In November 2013 the Committee agreed to extend the piece of work to include observation visits to Weston Park, Royal Hallamshire including the Jessops Wing and the Sheffield Children's Hospital (on behalf of the Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee).

1.5 This report covers the Sheffield Children's Hospital Trust. A separate report will be produced following the visits to Weston Park Hospital and the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, including the Jessops Wing.

1.6 Membership of the Task group:

- Councillor Gary Weatherall, Chair of the Task & Finish Group
- Councillor Janet Bragg
- Councillor Roger Davison
- Councillor Tony Downing
- Councillor Diana Stimely
- Councillor Joyce Wright – unable to attend visit
- Helen Rowe, Healthwatch, Sheffield

2.0 Introduction

2.1 In March 2014 the group visited Sheffield Children's Hospital; this report captures the outcomes of their visit. However, it should be noted that Scrutiny is not an inspection regime and that this report relates to their one visit, it therefore captures a "snap shot" of that particular day and needs to be considered in the context of all other research and consultation undertaken by the Trust.

2.2 The Group requested that their visit provide the following opportunities:

- To be able to visit during a meal time
- To see some of the different aspects of the food production system in terms of food preparation and distribution.
- To be able to speak to staff and patients about their experiences

2.3 The visit was co-ordinated by Judith Hodgkinson, Assistant Director Hotel Services, Sheffield Children's NHS Trust and was designed to provide all of the opportunities that the Group had requested.

3.0 The group's visit

The Group were given an overview of the approach to food preparation and service within the Children's Hospital, including the range of choices available and how feedback can be given by young patients and their parents / guardians.

The Group had the opportunity to talk to staff and a small number of young patients and their parents / guardians. They visited the kitchens and saw food being prepared and served. Some members of the group also had the opportunity to sample some of the food available.

The Group would like to thank Sheffield Children's NHS Trust and in particular the staff and patients involved in their visit

The following areas were discussed:

Preparation

The Trust prepares all food freshly from its own kitchens. The kitchens also supply food to the retail outlets, including the restaurant and so at times the menus are the same.

Wards are responsible for preparing breakfast for the children (hot breakfast options can also be ordered).

Ordering & Serving

Lunch and evening meal food orders are placed by the Wards. The Kitchen prepares the food and porters transport it, the Wards are then responsible for serving the food.

This has led to a number of Wards employing “housekeepers”.

Choice

The Trust operates a 3 weekly menu cycle; this was increased from 2 weekly to provide greater choice for those having a longer stay in hospital. There is also a snack menu which patients can order from. Dietary requirements are catered for e.g. halal / dairy free.

Parents / guardians

The Trust provides free hot drinks for parents / guardians which are available on a self-service basis. A 20% discount is available for the Parkside Restaurant for any parent / guardian whose child has been in hospital for more than 4 nights.

Capacity

Food can be requested from 8am-7pm every day. In total the hospital has 125 beds and the kitchens also provide snacks for the Assessment Unit and children who come as day attenders.

Waste

At present food waste levels are not systematically monitored by the Trust. The wards are responsible for dealing with food waste and so feedback on waste levels is anecdotal. This is something the Trust is looking into as part of the new building.

Feedback

There are a number of ways young patients and their parents / guardians can provide feedback e.g. via the comments boxes; the PALS (patient advice and liaison service) or contacting the hospital by email.

.Snack Menu

There was ongoing work to raise awareness of the “Patient Snack Menu” with Wards, so all Wards were fully aware of the menu and were ensuring children and their parents / guardians were also being told about it.

New Building

The new building will create more space and was also seen as an opportunity to do things differently including considering moving to the “cook and chill” food system. There is a plan to centralise the “housekeepers” as at present they are managed through individual wards

The Trust operates a 3 weekly menu cycle and also provides menus for various dietary requirements e.g. dairy free and gluten free, for both lunch and evening meal there was a choice of 2-3 different meal options, which for lunch included a range of hot and cold options. The Trust also produces themed menus for particular celebration events e.g. Halloween and Christmas and also for children’s birthdays. There was also a patient Snack Menu referred to as “Theo Friends” all day menu which could be ordered from between 7:30am-6:30pm every day.

An example of the choices available for lunch and an evening meal is outlined below:

Week 1 – Thursday’s menu

Lunch		Evening Meal
Beef Burger / Vegi Burger Salad Bun Chips Egg Mayo Sandwich Cheese Salad Papjack Fruit Salad		Roast chicken Cheese & potato bake Mashed potatoes Hash browns Carrots Broccoli Cheesecake Jam sponge & custard

4.0 Summary

The task Group believes that good nutrition and hydration is essential to aiding a patients’ recovery. Overall they were very impressed with what they saw in terms of food preparation and choice. There was also some very positive feedback from the young patients and their parents / guardians both in terms of the quality of the food but also about the choice and availability. As already stated Scrutiny is not an inspection regime and so the intention of the visit was not to mirror such an approach but to have an opportunity to informally look round the hospital and speak with staff and young patients and their parents / guardians to gain a better understanding into the hospitals approach to nutrition and hydration

The Group recognise the limitations of this approach and accept that any suggestions they make need to be considered in the context of all other research and consultation undertaken by the Trust. The Group also recognise that the Trust operates in a pressured environment, both in terms of service delivery and budget constraints. Within this context the Group would like to make a small number of suggestions.

5.0 Observations & Suggestions

The Task & Finish Group would like to make the following observations and suggestions, which they feel would reinforce the important message that good nutrition and hydration is essential to aiding a patients' recovery.

5.1 Monitoring food waste – the Group are aware that the Trust is exploring the possibility of introducing a waste monitoring system as part of the move to the new build. The Group would support the work the Trust is undertaking in this area and would recommend that a systematic approach to monitoring food waste be introduced as soon as possible.

5.2 Raising awareness of choice- the Trust acknowledged there was varied practice across the Wards in terms of raising awareness of the food choices available including the snack menu. This was reflected in the conversations members of the Group had with some of the young patients and their parents / carers, who in particular seemed unaware of the snack menu. Also are patients able to request healthy side orders to accompany lunch such as vegetable sticks? The Group would therefore support continued work with Wards to ensure they raise awareness of the food choices available, including the snack menu and where possible enable young patients and their parents / guardians to play an active role in choosing their meals.

5.3 Cultural variety – it was felt that the range of food available on the main lunch and evening meal menus, though extensive could be more culturally diverse; the group would ask that consideration be given to this suggestion.

5.4 Food presentation – in some instances the Group felt that food presentation could be improved, for example in terms of the sandwiches it was felt that the presentation could be enhanced to make them more appealing to the young patients.

5.5 Food Service – on one Ward the group felt that there was inadequate support for the Housekeeper in terms of serving the meals, which may also have led to a lack of organisation in terms of the service i.e. all the meals were taken out of the trolley at once so there was constant swapping from hot to cold meals (meaning that some food could deteriorate in appearance / quality during the wait). The group appreciate this may have been an isolated incident but would suggest that standard practice should be to serve the hot meals first followed by cold meals or vice versa.

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