



Re-Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Darlington Memorial Hospital Children's ward

Since the last evaluation Darlington Memorial Hospital Children's Ward has undergone structural changes. The team has continued to be involved in dialogue with children and young people from the ward.

I visited the ward in a couple of occasions. As patients are only ever in for a short period of time depending on their illness I spoke to 5 young people in the ward by one to one conversations. We talked about points raised from the last evaluation such as the ward's environment and attitude of the staff to children and young people. I was given a tour by the Ward Manager to see what changes were made.

Rooms

I spoke to the Ward Manager before I spoke to young people present at the ward. There have been a number of changes to the wards rooms. Rooms 3 to 7 are for the younger children up to the age of 6 years. They are situated near the nurse's room because with them being at a young age it is easy to get access in case of an emergency. There are two play rooms for 6 to 12 year olds; however one of the rooms is locked which is monitored by the activities play worker but she was on leave when I visited the hospital.

I had a look at the children's ward guided by the Ward Manager. I could see a wide selection of toys in all of the rooms. There is also a teenager's room which has television access, a hi-fi system and videos which is occasionally used for interviews from other professionals who wish to speak to the teenagers on confidential issues. There is also a computer area which is now where the nurse's outpost was situated but because of the pillar it was difficult to hear patient's calls as a result they decided to relocate the computer area.

The ward is being re-designed with the help of children and young people. There is a notice board with information and a comedy board to entertain children and young people. I noticed in the waiting area there was a playstation and television but the ward has introduced a system which monitors games due to stealing of games. However, service users are still allowed to use the console. Television on the ward is free up until 9pm but the televisions automatically switch off at 9pm. Parents said they would be happy to pay for the television after 9pm if the children cannot sleep and want to watch cartoons. The ward manager informed me that the ward is receiving £2,000 which is to be spent on toys for the ward. As a recommendation I would advise the wards to ask patients to be involved in this to ensure participation and dialogue continues with children and young people. There is also a snooker table and air hockey for all to access. The hospital has a no smoking policy everywhere.

I asked the young people what they thought of the rooms and if there were any changes they felt was needed. One young person said **"toys are too babyish, I would like an mp3 player and access to the Disney channel"** he also went on to say **"videos were fine"** and likes the free television until 9pm. He stated **"I have watched T.V, read magazines, it's alright I have been here since 8am but I**

haven't had a chance to use the facilities. The nurses are very kind, it's cosy and comfortable and the beds are fine". He didn't have a chance to play with toys as they had only been in that day. I could see that he was pleased with the ward but he gave some recommendations on what other toys could be bought for future patients.

I spoke to another young person she said **"like the toys but there were not a lot of toys"**. A parent said **"the room could do with a few more pictures."** A young girl said **"I like the toys a lot"**. Another young person liked the colours of the room.

One young person's favourite colour was green and his room was green. A parent stated the rooms were bare when I asked the little girl if she agreed with her mum she said "yeah".

Another parent suggested that en suite bathrooms would be helpful for children and young people. Perhaps the ward staff and patients could look into private bathrooms for children and young people. Sarah during play therapy asks young people to be part of group activities.

Communication

I talked to patients on the ward on how they felt about the ward staff and how they were communicated with. Generally the children and young people felt the ward staff were kind and communication with staff was excellent. There were concerns in the last evaluation about information to patients. I was informed by the ward manager that files are at the bottom of the bed but when I spoke to young people but I did not notice any charts or information.

I asked young people about personal information. I asked if they could get access to notes. A young girl has not seen her records but she was not bothered about seeing them. She went on to say **"I like the colours of the room and I want to be a nurse in the army and I like the nurses that much I feel safe in the ward."**

A young person said **"I have been able to see my records and have had enough information and the nurses are friendly"**. He felt like he could ask the nurses questions. He felt changes didn't need to be made.

Last time there was an issue with ward property being stolen unfortunately this is still the case but the ward has put in small measures to ensure all children and young people play with the playstation games. A young person commented about the nurses **"They are on the ball when something happens they tell you and explain it to you."**

Food

The ward have set up a steering group of a consultant, ward manager and a few of the nurses for healthy eating, they have taken away unhealthy food and have introduced a new healthy food system, fresh fruit is brought the patients everyday.

Some young people had mixed feelings about the food, one young lad had a beef sandwich, vanilla ice cream and he said **"it was nice"**. Other young people said the food was not very nice. It appeared to me when I was evaluating that people were not impressed with the food. I would recommend that the steering group for healthy eating should involve children and young people who use the ward.

From what I gathered today Darlington Memorial Hospital Children's Ward members of staff are willing to listen and make changes in the ward. I recommend when they receive the sum of £2,000 they should work with children and young people from the ward to see what they as a collective can change to make the ward 'service user friendly' in relation to the main topics from this evaluation which are food, communication within the ward and the wards rooms. The ward staff members should work with children and young people on health eating, providing they continuously seek the views and opinions of children and young people.

I revisited the ward to go through my report with the children & young people I met and they were happy with the contents therefore I am confident in awarding the Children's ward Investing in Children membership.

Children and Young Peoples Service Apprentice
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May 2007