

STOIC MEETING – NOTES & INFORMATION

Age Concern Hall, Linden Road – Friday 11th September 2009

The theme of the meeting was ‘**patient care on hospital wards**’ and followed on from our May meeting on ‘non-clinical services in hospitals’. We were very fortunate to have a couple of matrons from Southampton General Hospital who gave an interesting and thought-provoking talk before hosting a very engaging and lively question and answer session with the audience.

Katie Ord (Matron for Older People) and Meriel Chamberlain (Matron for Operations) explained the role of the ‘Modern Matron’, its origins back to the days of Florence Nightingale and what most people perceive the role to be. The matron is the most senior nurse in hospital and responsible for overseeing patient care and the efficient running of the hospital. The role of the matron was re-introduced in 2001 having previously been abolished in the late 1960’s. Matrons are expected to lead by example by setting the highest possible standards for nursing care.

Key 10 responsibilities are....

- Leading by example
- Making sure patients get quality care
- Ensuring staffing is appropriate to patient care
- Empowering nurses to take on a wider range of clinical tasks
- Improving hospital cleanliness
- Ensuring patients nutritional needs are met
- Improving wards for patients
- Making sure patients are treated with respect
- Preventing hospital acquired infections
- Resolving problems for patients and their relatives by building closer links

Katie and Meriel then gave some top level annual statistics on Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust (SUHT), the General Hospital being the major part of it i.e. employing over 8,000 staff, treating more than 115,000 inpatients, seeing around 350,000 outpatients. There are currently 30 matrons at SUHT and some 5,000 matrons nationally.

Both matrons talked about their own particular responsibilities and contribution towards the day-to-day running of their division/departments. Improving ‘patient experience’, providing quality care and resolving any issues are top of their agenda. They do this using a management process involving clinical coordinators/case managers, discharge coordinators and medical assistants. Also through managing the Discharge Bureau, where patients’ information is centrally tracked and monitored, and being responsible for the discharge process. Monitoring standards of cleanliness, infection prevention and quality of care are important responsibilities for the matron. Katie and Meriel went on to explain how they execute and achieve these responsibilities. Providing clinical leadership, being visible, walking around wards, talking to patients and staff, seeing what needs to be changed, is very important to delivering ongoing improvements. Education and staff development are also key, ensuring they have the right skills for now and in the future. Matrons are involved with Patient User Groups and act as advocates on behalf of patients, as well as providing senior support to divisional teams and link between wards/departments through to senior medical and administrative staff.

Katie and Meriel then invited **questions from the audience**. The following topics were brought up.

- Wearing of nurses uniforms when outside the hospital e.g. whilst travelling on public transport, out shopping, in cafes etc and the perceived risk of infection (MRSA etc) this may cause.

The official line is that there is a zero tolerance to nurses shopping whilst in their uniforms. However, travelling to/from work in uniform is permissible as there are no changing facilities (or indeed laundry facilities) at Southampton General. Sometimes people can mistake care workers for nurses as often their uniforms can look quite similar.

- Patients' food was another area that people were concerned about, in terms of nutritional value, menu choice, monitoring of eating/drinking.

Katie and Meriel explained that important new catering arrangements were being implemented in the hospital with effective from this October (Princess Anne in October; The General in November). A new food system called 'Steamplicity' is being introduced, whereby sealed meals steamed in microwaves (using many raw ingredients) are steamed in kitchens near the wards and brought to patients by dedicated Ward Hostesses. They will do this within 2 hours of ordering and will be able to do it outside normal mealtimes as well. There will be more choice, special menus and food ordered just 2 hours beforehand. This will free up more nursing and housekeeping staff time to spend directly with patients, help them eat.

Question concerning the new menu (circulated around the room for info):

There only appears to be 1 choice of vegetable (excl. potatoes) per plate meal. Is this correct and how does this equate to the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day? Katie and Meriel to find out and advise.

- Staff coverage and working patterns/hours.

Generally operate a flexible working policy which is regularly reviewed, and try to accommodate individual needs and preferences as best as possible.

Matrons work a standard 37.5 hour week between Monday and Friday (other senior staff are on duty at weekends). Nursing staff traditionally used to work a combination of either 5 days x 7.5 hours or a pattern of regular long 12 hour based shifts to make up the working week. However, due to the unpopularity of the long shifts new weekly working arrangements based on 2 long shifts (11.5 hours) and 2 short shifts (7.5 hours) were introduced from the 1st September and so far have been very well received. This has resulted in more efficient staff handovers at the end of shifts and better take-up of education days by nursing staff.

- Types and numbers of staff on wards.

Depends on which shift, number of beds per ward and the available funding. National guidance exists for determining the number of nurses per bed.

At the General the following numbers are typical (based on 26-30 beds per ward):

- Early shift = 3 nurses, 4 healthcare assistants

- Late shift = 3 nurses, 3 healthcare assistants
- Night shift = 2 nurses, 2 healthcare assistants

Staff can be identified by the colour of their uniforms, as follows:

- Matrons = purple
- Sisters/senior nurses = navy blue
- Trained nurses = royal blue
- Enrolled nurses (band 4) = still deciding colour
- Healthcare assistants = pale blue
- Students = blue and white strips
- Ward hostesses/housekeepers = lavender

Information from Katie and Meriel – Southampton General Hospital are holding an Open Day on Saturday 26th September (11am-3pm) and everyone is welcome. Theatre and Ward tours will be available as well the opportunity to ask questions etc. Free parking available!

‘Shaping the Future of Care Together’ – (ref: Government Green Paper)

All STOIC members are invited to a ‘Big Care Debate’ being hosted by Hampshire County Council at the Guildhall in Andover on the 29th September 2.15-4.15 as part of the Andover & District Older Peoples Forum. This is to discuss the Government’s proposals and formulate our responses to the consultation questions. **If you would like to attend we may be able to arrange transport – please let Paul Buxton know asap.**

The Green Paper concerns the reform of the adult care and support system in England. ‘Shaping the Future...’ spells out a vision to build a National Care Service that is fair, simple and affordable.

To coincide with this Green Paper, Age Concern/Help the Aged have produced a combined document called ‘10 Tests for Government’s Green Paper on the Future of Care and Support’. This is a basic check to see if the Government’s proposals will actually improve the quality of care for older people. Overall an excellent short document (*please let Anne Meader or Paul Buxton know if you would like to see it*). However, a very important piece in the Green Paper indicates that the Government may be proposing to stop Attendance Allowance in order to help fund the new system, and the alternative being some form of means-tested support. The response from our meeting was a definite ‘no’ to this proposal, recognising the significance of the Attendance Allowance in helping older people keep their independence by remaining in their own homes. This is underlined by the fact that currently 85% of older people don’t access health and social care but do receive Attendance Allowance.

We feel that a joint letter of protest against the potential withdrawal of Attendance Allowance would carry more weight and influence. **If you agree please submit all comments to Paul Buxton as soon as you can.**

For your information also included in the paper are proposals for improvements to hospital discharges, home care and other topics.

A.O.B.

STOIC Membership Secretary

Regretfully Julie Gale has resigned from her post as Membership Secretary so we would like appoint a replacement asap. **Nominations please to Paul Buxton.**

STOIC Membership Fees

Anne Meader proposed two methods of raising money to help with our overall running costs e.g. hall hire, producing the Newsletter etc, and towards the cost of providing refreshments at our meetings.

Anne outlined two options in this regard.

- Option 1 = £5 annual membership fee and/or
- Option 2 = £1 contribution charge per meeting (i.e. for non-members)

General consensus was to implement both options starting from our next meeting on the 13th November and people who want to join should bring £5 with them on the day.

STOIC Newsletter

We have just produced our third newsletter which was given out at the meeting. It's purpose being to inform people of our latest news and activities, notes from recent meetings, topics of general interest and to advise on future meeting dates and topics. We really need your feedback. Please submit any comments or indeed input for future editions to Veronica Lakey (oakbank21@talktalk.net).

Copies of our newsletter can be found on our website www.romseynet.org.uk/STOIC/index.html

Also volunteers are always needed to deliver copies of our newsletter (published about 6 times per year) to agreed locations (not 'door-to-door') within Romsey and surrounding areas. Please contact Veronica if you are able to help. (Note: Monica Lanigan kindly offered to deliver copies in North Baddesley).

(Note: recommended that we publicise STOIC meetings in the Baddesley Beadle and Romsey Abbey's Open Door publication, any others? Currently we advertise in the Romsey Advertiser, Romsey Gazette, Romsey Contact and TVBC News).

TVBC Transport Forum

John White kindly volunteered to represent STOIC at these meetings (every 2-3 months alternating between Romsey and Andover).

TVBC consultation on 'accessibility'

TVBC are running a small consultation process on their services by trying to make them more physically accessible for people i.e. better access to buildings, removing barriers etc. Generally making it easier for people whilst they are out and about. A public meeting is being held at Woodley Village Hall on Friday 2nd October between 11.00 - 13.00. There will also be the opportunity to ask questions on all sorts of topics such as benefits, council tax, waste, recycling, recreation facilities etc. TVBC would like to know if there are any gaps in their current range of services and where improvements can be made.

Hampshire Now magazine

Latest special edition for Older People, produced by HCC, is now being distributed to eligible households across the county. This is part of the Older People's Well-being Team initiative and provides information about services and organisations relevant to older residents. We understand the next edition is due out in January so if you have any feedback or suggestions **please contact Paul Buxton and we will be delighted to pass them on to Hampshire County Council.**

Canal Walk Development

TVBC are holding a public display on proposals for developing the land at Canal Walk adjacent to Romsey Train Station, at their Duttons Road offices on Thursday 1st October.

Members Interest Forms

Completing one of these gives you the opportunity to raise any particular interests, issues or concerns. We try to address/take these forward on our collective behalf. Input can also form the basis of future items and speakers at our meetings. We want to hear your views, opinions and concerns.

Please contact Paul Buxton, Age Concern on 01794 521398.

Our next STOIC meeting will take place on Friday 13th November at the Age Concern Hall, Romsey from 2.05 to 4.00pm. The theme of the meeting will be 'Reducing Doorstep Crime – Protecting Older People' with a guest speaker from Hampshire County Council Trading Standards.

Please note that this meeting will be our **Annual General Meeting** as we have now been in full operation for one year.