

Reading LINK

Local Involvement Network

FINAL REPORT ON REVIEW OF TREATMENT OF PATIENTS ON THE AUTISTIC SPECTRUM IN ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY AT ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

BACKGROUND

This referral was brought to Reading Local Involvement Network (LINK) by the Berkshire Autistic Society (BAS). A survey was undertaken by the BAS of their members and local research undertaken by the LINK. Responses showed that more information and training was required in A & E to improve the experience for those on the autistic spectrum when receiving treatment. BAS wished to support the hospital in improving the system, but did not have sufficient resources to undertake this training. They raised the issue with the Reading LINK to investigate. The main areas to be investigated were:

- **What training do staff receive in managing these patients' care?**
- **When patients are moved to other wards or departments how is the information conveyed with them?**
- **How aware are staff that a full explanation is always required when equipment is being used?**
- **How are staff trained to identify adults on the Autistic spectrum?**

PROCESS

Reading LINK in partnership with BAS was able to take these issues forward. The Reading LINK had already established a positive relationship with the Patient and Public Involvement Team at the hospital and was able to set up a meeting between key staff at the hospital, BAS and the Reading LINK.

KEY FINDINGS

A key finding from the meeting established training was currently inadequate and no guidelines existed for treatment of patients on the autistic spectrum. All staff present at the meeting exhibited a willingness and commitment on behalf of the hospital to improve this. The representative from BAS was able to describe useful methods for engaging these patients, which the hospital were keen to adopt.

OUTCOME

The meeting agreed the following actions:

- **To draw up a brief training programme for staff (medical and nursing) on identifying patients on the autistic spectrum**
- **The hospital will develop an 'alert card' and liaise with BAS to identify key points for inclusion on the card**
- **The Senior Nurse/Learning Disability Coordinator would provide a short article for inclusion in the BAS Newsletter to enable carers and patients to make contact with her**
- **Leaflets already available at the hospital depicting common procedures using simple words and line drawings will be circulated to BAS members for comment**

At the time of writing this report the BAS representative was able to report continued progress on a number of the agreed action points.

CONCLUSION

In its early days Reading LINK had established a positive relationship with local commissioners and providers of service. This relationship resulted in the Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust taking a very positive approach to the LINK when this issue was raised with them. The Trust demonstrated a commitment to improving their service in this area. Key members of staff were enthusiastic in working with BAS and the Reading LINK to implement changes to ensure better treatment of those on the autistic spectrum in A & E.

The Reading LINK was able to assist BAS in developing a relationship with the appropriate personnel in the hospital. BAS now feels confident they can assist the Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in further improving the care received by people on the autistic spectrum in the A & E setting. It is also recognized that work carried out in this area would potentially benefit other areas within the Trust.

Report Completed: October 2009