

Minute No. 45 RFT Quality Accounts

Information supplied by Hilary Fawcett, Head of Clinical Governance, Community Health, in response to queries raised at the meeting:-

Falls rates in Rotherham

The RFT has one of the lowest falls rate in the UK. Falls are consistently monitored as part of the Quality Accounts and this will be on-going for the coming year. The number of falls recorded on the Trust incident reporting system has varied over 2011/12 . Following a peak in November, there has been a marked decrease in December, lower than the equivalent month last year. While some further improvements have been seen in relation to completion of falls assessments, it is recognised that further work is needed to consistently remain at or below the target level set for last year. We are also working with the community, NHS Rotherham and social service to develop a more robust intergrated falls service with a full review of integrated care pathways. This work is being led and monitored by a Falls Steering Group. We have also led on a collaborative workshop with Sheffield and Doncaster in sharing our learning in relation to falls.

Weekend Mortality rate

Proposed quality indicator – to reduce weekend mortality rates from April 2012 baseline.

To put this into context, a study carried out by University College London has found that patients are ‘more likely to die in hospital if they are admitted at weekends’ following a review of 14 million admissions to English hospitals.

The study found a pattern relating to admission day but the reasons for this are unknown and the assumption cannot be made that this relates to staffing levels or availability of senior staff. For example, it is possible that the figure is affected by the death of severely ill patients admitted as an emergency at the weekend. Patients with less severe illness would potentially wait until the following Monday before seeing a Doctor / admission. There are no planned admissions at weekends, all admissions therefore are patients who are potentially seriously ill.

The inclusion of this proposed indicator in the Quality Accounts is not to suggest a specific problem in Rotherham, but to ensure that the outcome of this study is taken into account in the ongoing detailed monitoring of all deaths which already takes place. If necessary, any identified themes or trends which arise through this monitoring process will be addressed. This will be the specific responsibility of the Medical Director.

Role of volunteers

I also agreed to look into an additional query raised about the role of volunteers in the hospital and whether they had involvement with supporting patients at mealtimes.

Volunteers do carry out wide ranging roles across the Trust, with the scope of their involvement detailed in the Volunteer Strategy and role outlines. They do assist with mealtimes, for example delivering /removing trays, providing drinks, helping with hand cleansing. They do not directly feed patients, which is considered to be the responsibility of the professional staff on the ward. Their role in supporting mealtimes means that the ward health professionals and support staff are able to focus on supporting patients and ensure nutritional needs are met.