

# Listen, Learn, Share

Autumn 2022

Edition 4 – Volunteering Special

## Introduction



Welcome to the 4th Edition of 'Listen, Learn, Share', published by the Patient Experience Team. This is a special edition with Volunteer Guest Writers Niraj, Phil, and Adelina. You can read more about them and their roles on pages 5-7. A lot has been happening to develop patients' experiences at RWT throughout June, July and August, so read on to catch up on all the news!

Inside, you will find lots of information about how the Patient Experience Team is working to ensure that the patients' voices are heard. This enables us to ensure that RWT's practice does not only excel in the delivery of care, but that it continually improves to be the service that our patients want it to be

The Patient Experience Team is RWT's hub for complaints, compliments and queries, also Equality, Diversity and Inclusion from a patient's perspective and volunteering services which enhance patients' experiences.

Our ethos is that we are as keen to hear about when things aren't so good, as well as hearing compliments, although these make us very happy!

By listening to feedback and sharing this information with our stakeholders, we can identify areas where we can put changes into place that will make our Trust's services even better. We aspire to provide excellence in the care that we give and exceed expectations.

Please read on and, if you have any comments, queries, compliments, complaints or stories, do get in touch with us.

**Patient Experience Team  
Contact Details:**



**Patient Experience Team:  
Generic Email:**  
rwh-tr.pals@nhs.net

**Queries, concerns and  
compliments:**  
rwt-tr.PALS@nhs.net

**Telephone:**  
01902 695362 / 695368

**Follow us on Twitter:**  
@RWT\_patientexp



**Alison Dowling**  
Head of Patient Experience  
and Public Involvement

## Patient Experience

# Complaints and PALS Concerns

## Complaints and PALS Concerns

Once a formal complaint is received by the Trust it is subject to triage, grading, acknowledgment and allocation to the appropriate specialty and identified Investigating Officer. The NHS procedure for handling complaints is divided into two stages:

- 1. Local resolution** – This provides the quickest and fullest resolution to a complaint. This process must be fair, open, flexible and conciliatory to both complainant and staff. The Trust will send a response, following investigation, to the complainant making the complaint
- 2. Independent review** by the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

The Trust time-scale for responding to formal complaints is 30 working days. Some complaints within healthcare can be very complex and can require a lengthy investigation process in order to provide a high quality response proportionate to the concerns raised.

On completion of the investigation the draft response is quality assured at divisional level to ensure that the concerns raised have been addressed openly and honestly.

For those complaints where the outcome is partly or fully upheld an action plan will be compiled to address any gaps in service provision or patient safety and care.

Between January to March 2021 the Trust received, investigated and responded to 153 formal complaints. Within the same time-frame there were 180 PALS concerns received.

The following examples relate to two formal complaint summaries, and outlines actions identified following the complaint investigation.

## Case 1

Patient had two admissions to hospital after having two separate falls at home.

Whilst an inpatient the patient suffered speech and cognitive impairment which was not clinically attributed to someone having a stroke.

Due to a deterioration in the patient's condition antibiotics were prescribed and a CT scan requested. A review of the CT scan confirmed that the patient had suffered multiple strokes which had been mis-diagnosed.

Communication between the hospital and the family was also noted as being poor.

### Action Taken:

- Improve communication – Consultant rotas were altered to give consistent and visible cover resulting in better patient management plans and communication
- Improve recognition for symptoms of a stroke – Teaching programme for medical and nursing staff on recognition of the signs and symptoms and prompt consideration of diagnosis with investigation for acute strokes
- Wider learning – Circulation of a Trust-wide alert to prompt clinicians to hear relatives' concerns

## Case 2

Family contacted GP Surgery to request an urgent doctor's appointment to gain clinical advice and possible treatment for a family member but was informed that there were no available appointment slots. The family also asked for the GP to assist in escalating a referral that had been made to Paediatric Services.

Further contact was made with the GP Surgery as no contact had been forthcoming from Paediatric Services. An appointment was then made for a telephone consultation with the GP.

The family felt that attempts to secure professional help and support were hindered by the receptionists at the practice who failed to give the care of duty that falls within their job roles.

The family felt let down and that the receptionists lacked empathy and understanding.

### Actions Taken

- Generic task box to be set-up to which for all reception staff will have access
- Customer Service training to be delivered for reception staff
- Review of the appointment system and training around the prioritisation of the need for urgent telephone and face to face appointments

The Trust recognises the need to provide an overview of key issues arising out of the themed review based on feedback from patients, carers and relatives and stakeholder organisations about their experiences of care; and details of actions intended to improve the experience of patients. As an organisation, the Trust recognises that by responding well to complaints and feedback from patients we improve the patient and carer experience and increase public confidence in the services that we provide.

A deep dive analysis was undertaken by the Patient Experience Team into feedback gained where 'Attitude' was identified as the main theme.

## Complaints

Assessing more recent data, the formal complaints relating to Q1 2022/23 (April-June 2022) where 171 complaints were received in total, 19 (11%) were categorised in the main relating to 'Attitude'. The sub-categories of 'discourteous and dismissive' had the most complaints aligned to them.

Theme 'Attitude' with Sub-Categories	Volume (19 cases)
Aggression	3
Discourteous	8
Dismissive	5
Insensitive	3

## Friends and Family Test

The Feedback Cloud is a visual representation of the number of times a keyword appeared throughout the comments. The larger the keyword in the Feedback Cloud the more times it occurred in the comments.



Positive	Negative
1. Staff attitude 531	1. Staff attitude 262

Looking at the theming for the Emergency Department, the volume of positive comments relating to 'Attitude' outweighed the negative on a ratio of almost 2:1.

## Actions taken

During late 2021 early 2022 the Heads of Patient Experience (HoPE) Network worked collaboratively to address key issues for Patient Experience Teams, wider healthcare staff, patients and their families during a challenging period in the delivery of our usual services. As the pandemic progressed, there were increasing calls from the HoPE Network to look at issues relating to aggression towards staff both within Experience of Care and patient facing roles.

In conjunction with the delivery of bespoke training sessions to ED staff both clinical and administrative around aggression, the Trust PALS service has already commissioned a training video which can be enhanced and used for bespoke training sessions with staff.

Following this initiative, the Patient Experience Team are seeking to identify Patient Experience Champions who can pass on the concepts they have learned to colleagues and widen the Trust learning.

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# Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

Where a case has been partially or fully upheld, the Trust will receive recommendations from the PHSO to consider and implement.

The following is an example of a completed case:

### Case 1

This case relates to aspects of care received by the patient and poor level of communication with the family whilst under the care of The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust.

The theme of the PHSO's findings related to nutrition and general care of patient.

Following a full formal investigation, the PHSO recommended the following proportionate resolution;

The Trust should acknowledge and apologise for its failure to correctly communicate the feeding plan and prevent the build-up of plaque in the patient's mouth.

The Trust must provide an outline of what it has done, or will do, to prevent these failings from happening again and include an action plan.

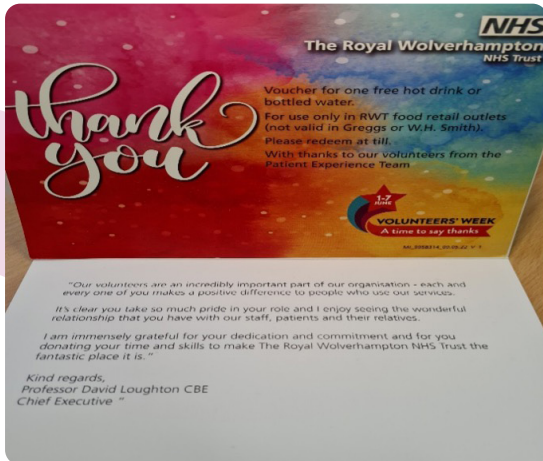


# Volunteers Week – A Time to Say Thanks



RWT's team of volunteers has worked hard to bring much-valued additional support to the Trust during a sweltering Summer. We celebrated Volunteers' Week in June by offering all our wonderful volunteers a special 'thank you' to recognise the very positive difference that their contribution makes to our patients – and their families too.

A card of thanks signed by our Chief Executive, David Loughton, C.B.E, was sent to each to the volunteers, together with a voucher for a complementary drink from one of the Trust's food outlets.



We hope that it was a small recognition of a huge contribution on the part of the volunteers.

During the period June – August 2022 volunteers contributed an amazing **1034** hours of their own time to support patients at RWT. This represents an extra 1034 hours of quality care input to patients that the paid staff would have found hard to give. The table below shows how these hours were distributed between Cannock, West Park and New Cross hospitals.

Location	Volunteering Hours	No. of volunteers	Average hours / volunteer
New Cross Hospital	861	37	23
West Park Hospital	87	6	15
Cannock Chase Hospital	37	3	12
<b>Total hours volunteered</b>	<b>1034</b>		

In this special edition, you will be able to meet some of the volunteers and learn about the range of the work that they do.

## A Day in the Life

In Volunteers' Week, our Social Media followers were able to experience what it is like to volunteer for a day when our Communications Team shadowed volunteer Niraj on C21, the specialist stroke ward at New Cross Hospital.

The team documented Niraj's day from the moment he arrived, to the moment that he left and tweeted out his day in real time as it happened. This gave a real insight into what it is to volunteer.

The tweets brought home clearly the benefits to patients of having a non-clinical contact to brighten up their day as we well as the benefit that Niraj derived from contributing his time to support RWT.

Here are some photos of Niraj at work.



Niraj says:

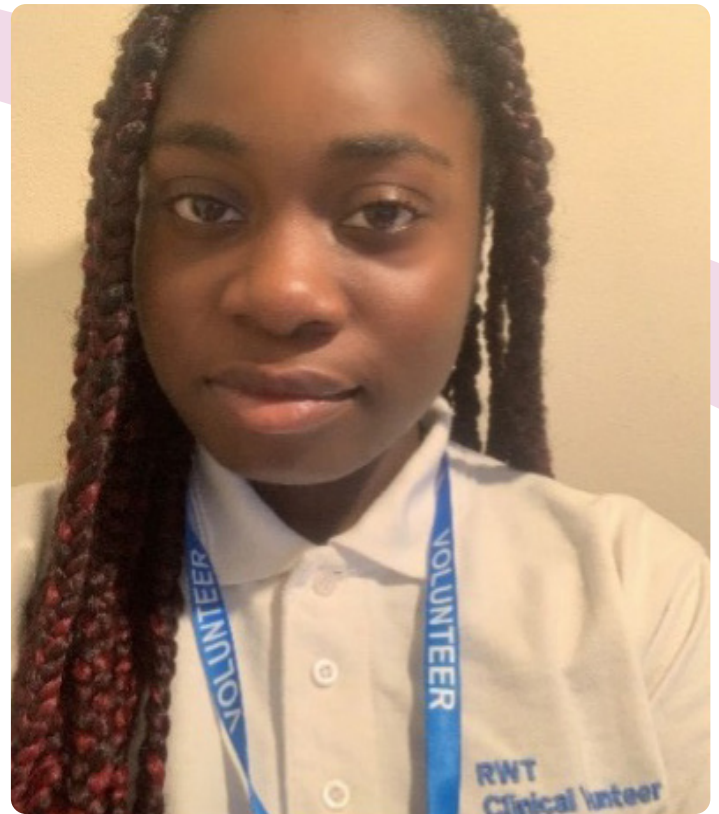
"...one of the patients told me that "The volunteers are great. We need more of them. They help us with the little things and free up the nurses to get on with other important tasks."

Being a volunteer is a rewarding role by making a difference to patients' lives in hospital whether it is providing them with a hot drink or simply having a conversation with them, I feel as if I have made a difference to their lives."

### Coming back for more: Adelina's experience of volunteering

Adelina works on the stroke and endoscopy wards and, as well as cleaning beds and helping with communications, Adelina's experience of having conversations with patients is what keeps her coming back for more.

"I initially started to volunteer as a way of work experience for my prospective career. However, as I kept volunteering on these wards, I found myself going back due to the sheer excitement of helping those who needed help, being able to talk to these people and find out who they are aside from their diagnosis was something I wasn't expecting to get out of volunteering, but I genuinely looked forward to doing so! One of my favourite memories was when a lady had come in the Endoscopy ward and she seemed to be a bit disorientated from her surgery, so I kept coming back to see how she was doing and when she felt okay and I was able to give her refreshments, she said that she noticed I came back to see how she was doing and she thanked me for that and we got to talking for a bit. Although it seemed light-hearted, I noticed how it made a difference to her experience in the hospital! "



Adelina realises that staff have limited time to converse with patients. "It's harder for them to develop a relationship with the patients and that often can make patients feel quite underwhelmed with their experience in the hospital. So, us volunteers are able to provide that side of care by communicating with them more often and help make them think of other things than their diagnosis."



# Volunteering (continued)

## Coming back for more: Adelina's experience of volunteering (continued)

Adelina added: "I'm normally based in Endoscopy and the Stroke ward sometimes. I make sure patients in Endoscopy get refreshments after a few hours of their surgery, as well as clean beds and of course communicating with these patients to make them feel comfortable and alleviate them from their pain. In the Stroke Ward, I usually go for tea/coffee rounds and assist with lunches and dinners. I also help with calls, whether it'd be from family members or other healthcare professionals around be trust. One thing that stood out to me when I went to Endoscopy, was that the nurses told me that I was the first volunteer they had on the ward and were grateful that I took the time to come and help them out and relate to the patient on a more personal level as they're often quite busy. I think often because healthcare professionals are busy with tending to many patients."

## Fun and Games with Phil

As well as helping with ward tasks, such as supporting patients with food and cleaning, Phil helps out with games for the patients. More than simply playing to pass the time, playing games is a therapeutic activity for both the mind and the body.

Even simple movement can exercise arm muscles and having to plot and plan keeps the brain stimulated. Simple game playing can really help a patient to recover more fully and encourages social interaction.

Phil says:

"My role as a volunteer is assisting staff with the meals for the patients and talk to the patients and doing an activity with the patients were possible and making drinks. Also helping staff to issue visitors' passes at the Visitor Welcome Hub. I find this rewarding and am appreciated by the staff. My role does help the patients to socialise with others and the staff do show appreciation "



# RWT's Visitor Welcome Hub

During July & August 2022, The Visitor Welcome Hub facilitated 16,205 bookings with a daily average of 261 visits. As visiting slots allow for 2 visitors that's potentially 32,410 visitors. Our team of roving reporters has been out to meet and interview three members of our hard-working Hub team, Chantelle, Davina and Kerry.

## What does your day consist of when you are working on the Patient Visitor Welcome Hub?

**Kerry:** As well as our key role of booking visitors by telephone, and checking for double bookings we answer a huge number of queries about a range of issues such as directions, where to find a wheelchair and car park enquiries! Despite that, we get the bookings done. It's nice to be able to help people as fully as we can.

**Chantelle:** After setting up for the day and getting the desk ready, we're all ready for a mass of calls at 10.00. Checking visit requests against our list of COVID-19 positive patients means that we are keeping vulnerable patients – and their relatives and friends -as safe as we can whilst still enabling valuable visits to take place.

**Davina:** Making sure that there is only one visit per patient is important too. Not only from keeping everyone safe, it's also fairer. It means that everyone has an opportunity for a visit.

## The Visitor Welcome Hub opened up the opportunity for relatives and friends to visit after a long period of lockdown. What were the first few days like?

**Davina:** We had to learn to work quickly with a new I.T. package and build systems around it.

We also had to learn our duties to direct people around the hospital very quickly indeed! There was a lot of trial and error but with a lot of people supporting us, we soon found the best way of working to enable patients to have much-needed visits from relatives and friends

**Kerry:** It was incredibly busy! Yes, we put the systems together and learned what worked and what didn't. There were so many people supporting us, it was a relief when we could finally decide for ourselves, with experience, the best way of working. We really wanted to give the visitors the best visiting system that we could.

## It's not unusual for visiting relatives and friends to be worried or upset. What sort of skills do you need to work effectively with anxious callers?

**Chantelle:** Yes, callers can be fraught. It's important to see through that, though, and remain calm, sympathetic and professional. It's also very important to understand some of the tensions that patients might be experiencing and identify the right level of tone and attitude to help visitors to make their bookings.

**Davina:** I agree completely. Sometimes it's clear that there are special circumstances within a family that affect their ability to visit. That's when we'll call ward staff and to discuss how we can be compassionate and purposeful in arranging a visit to support them and the patient.

**Kerry:** Patience with people is essential when they are distressed. Older people really appreciate when you are patient and when you communicate at the right level.



# RWT's Visitor Welcome Hub (continued)

**What do you think that patients and visitors gain from having a team to help them to arrange a visit?**

**Davina:** Patients are vulnerable. Knowing that RWT is working hard to control the number of visitors in the wards helps to ease their fears of catching COVID-19.

**Kerry:** With the Hub staff controlling numbers of visitors, all patients have the opportunity to have at least one visitor per day. This is one less task for ward staff to monitor which means that they have more time to give great personal care.

**Chantelle:** Knowing that they can receive at least one visit a day is a huge comfort to patients.

**And, finally, what do you enjoy about working with the callers and visitors?**

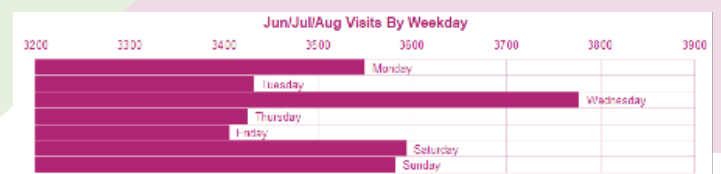
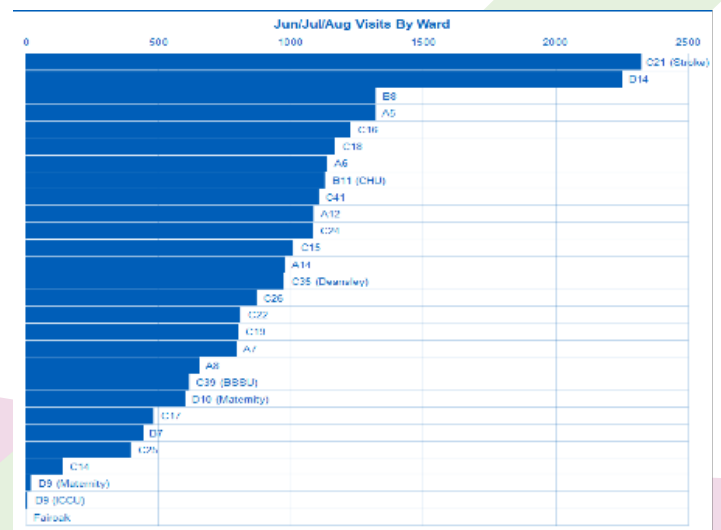
**Chantelle:** For some people whose partners are in hospital, it's an opportunity to talk to someone if they have been on their own. Although we are busy, it's good to know that we are making a difference – even with a short conversation.

**Davina:** After chatting on the phone to visitors, it's nice when they come to the desk to collect their visitor pass. You can put a face to the voice!

**Kerry:** After spending 32 years working with a team in an office, it's nice to see life and wonderful to meet such a varied range of caring people!

RWT is very grateful to patients, to friends and families for bearing with us when visitor numbers had to be reduced. The restrictions were put into place to prevent an uncontrolled spread of the COVID-19 virus throughout the Trust's operations. This would have endangered both already seriously ill people and the staff who care for them.

Printed below you will see the statistics for bookings made via the Visitor Welcome Hub for June, July and August 2023 when visiting was re-allowed. From these high figures, you will envisage how high the transmission risk might have been had visitor numbers not been controlled.



# Accessibility and Engagement



## Making Services Accessible to Deaf and Deafened people



Making sure that RWT's services are patient-led and ensuring that these services are fully accessible to all patients, whoever they are, is at the heart of the Patient Experience Team's work.

In June and September, in conjunction with CommPlus, two Deaf awareness sessions were arranged. As well as helping staff to understand how to communicate effectively with Deaf and Deafened patients and colleagues, British Sign Language (BSL) signs for basic medical needs were taught. The staff had the opportunity to learn BSL finger spelling too for quick communication.

This means that nearly 100 staff members are now familiar and have been trained in basic techniques to ensure that our Deaf patients feel accepted and included.

## Observe and Act



The gradual easing of COVID-19 limitations has meant that the Patient Experience Team can now start to re-introduce these critical-friend observations to support ward staff.

'Observe and Act' is not an inspection, but a structured observation of how all aspects of a service function from a patient's point of view. Supported by volunteers and patients, this is a patient-centred improvement tool that is being adopted nationally. RWT has played a major part in developing the inclusion and accessibility element of this project.

## Improving Patient Relations



Emergency (ED) Departments nationally are recognised as having major challenges with aggression and abuse against staff. After bidding for funding from NHS England, the Patient Experience Team has written a training package to train ED staff in identifying their styles of dealing with conflict and to appreciate the importance of good communication in minimising aggression. Twelve tips for de-escalating aggressive situations are taught, together with key interpersonal skills. Nine sessions are to be delivered to ED teams and will be rolled out across RWT. It is hoped that this training will reduce aggression and the number of complaints received.

# Council of Members Update

## RWT's Council of Members

The Council of Members continues to play an important role in the development and review of Trust services. We currently have 7 members who bring with them a wealth of experience through their use of Trust services and professional backgrounds. After limited on-site involvement during the pandemic restrictions, the Council has been able to hold face to face meetings again after the COVID-19 restrictions were eased. Since the beginning of this year the Council has met four times covering subjects such as:

- Haematology Services
- Equality Delivery System
- British Sign Language and Anti- aggression Training
- Same Sex Accommodation Policy
- Place-Led Assessment of the Care Environment

Members have also put themselves forward to be involved in several other activities and initiatives. These include:

- 'Observe and Act'. This is a 'critical-friend' observation visit that looks at all or part of a service from the viewpoint of: environment, communication, person-centred care, food and drink and safety. Accessibility and Inclusion are also observed within these headings

- Trust Policy Group. This involves the review of Trust policies and operating procedures
- Patient and Staff Access Group. This working group has been looking at issues of physical access on trust sites
- Place Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) – A national assessment initiative which with a focus on the environment in which care is delivered
- Review of leaflets

We are always looking to attract additional patients or former patients to widen the breadth and experience of the Council and would welcome interest from people from a whole range of different backgrounds, skills, cultures and abilities.

For further information contact the Patient Experience Team on **01902 694479** or email [rwh-tr.EqualityandDiversity@nhs.net](mailto:rwh-tr.EqualityandDiversity@nhs.net)



<https://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-experience-team/>

Designed and produced by The Department of Clinical Illustration and Graphic Design, New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton, WV10 0QP - Tel: 01902 695377

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