



**Continence Service
Follow Up Report
November 2018**

Introduction and Rationale

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees carried out an investigation in September 2017 to gather feedback from service users, family members and carers about their experiences of the continence service in Teesside. Healthwatch made a number of recommendations for improvement to the service providers and are now carrying out a follow up investigation to identify if service user's experience has improved or if further improvements are required.

Methodology

Healthwatch designed a questionnaire to gather the views and experiences of carers and service users of the continence service. The questionnaire was circulated via email, social media and face to face at a number of engagement events. The questionnaire was also circulated more widely with the support from the Live Well Dementia Hub, Healthwatch Hartlepool and other organisations across Teesside.

Results

Healthwatch Stockton gathered feedback from 10 individuals, 6 of which were service users and 4 carers / family members. All of the individuals who responded explained that they have been using the continence service for a long period of time, ranging from 2 to 10 years.

When asked 'How easy was it to access the continence service?' 56% of respondents said 'Ok' and 33% said 'difficult' or 'very difficult'.

When asked if they received regular planned follow up reviews, 50% of respondents said 'No'. Not one individual who completed the questionnaire had been informed about the financial benefits that may be available to them which may support the cost of buying extra continence products.

When asked 'Do you feel the range of products available are appropriate to your needs?' 89% of respondents said 'No'. The following comments were received:

'Whilst the pads supplied are adequate, it would be much more beneficial if incontinence pants were also supplied'

'There were no pants included in the delivery, these are essential to keep the pads in place'

'I was told I had to go and buy them [pants]'

'No service provision outside the one size fits all'

'My needs weren't listened to'

'The products provided are horrible'

When asked ‘Are you currently experiencing any problems with the delivery of your continence products?’ 75% of respondents said ‘No’. Those who had experienced problems gave the following feedback:

‘Last supply was wrong size’

‘The replacement delivery did not arrive’

‘When it did arrive, after a phone call, there were two deliveries in one day’

When asked ‘Do you feel improvements to the continence service are required?’ 88% of respondents said ‘Yes’. The following comments were received:

‘It would help if the initial phone call was more helpful’

‘No follow up service’

‘Regular follow up appointments needed’

‘Continence advisors need to listen to the service user’

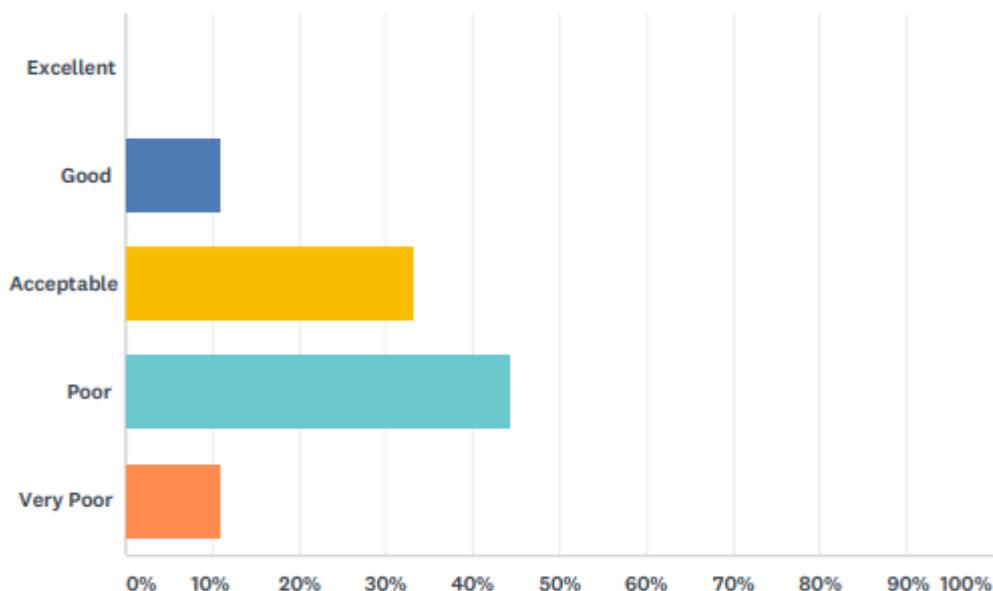
‘The service should accommodate all service users and not just offer one type of pad’

‘Better products needed’

‘I pay for pull ups, sheets and bags as these are not provided in the service’

‘I find the service wholly lacking in supporting those that need it’

When asked ‘How would you rate your overall experience of the continence service?’ the results can be found in the graph below.



Conclusion

Although the feedback gathered was only from a small number of people accessing the continence service, it is apparent that the service is still not meeting individuals' needs.

Following our previous report, Hartlepool and Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group provided Healthwatch with their action plan about the actions and improvements they were making to this service in response to our recommendations which included the following:

- The continence service provides a follow up phone call one week after assessment to ensure the pads have arrived and that the person knows how to use the equipment and that the equipment/pads supplied are meeting their needs.
- Regular, planned follow up reviews to be introduced to provide guidance and ensure the needs of the patient and carer are being met. Perhaps a phone call every 3 months or a pre-printed post card asking three simple questions regarding the supply, fit and effectiveness of the equipment/supplies (with a pre-paid return envelope).
- A further study be carried out by the continence services to see if deviances exist between assessments instigated by a hospital trust to those from community services.
- Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees recommend that at assessment, awareness is raised with the service user around financial benefits that may be available to them, which may support the cost of extra items, perhaps in the form of a leaflet or information sheet.

Although some actions have been taken with the aim to improve the service, feedback highlights the need for further improvements to be made to ensure service users, family members and carers have a good experience and are satisfied with the service provision. Healthwatch will therefore be monitoring service user experience of the continence service in 2019 to identify if further investigation is required.

Acknowledgements

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