



1 June 2021

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Ms Jennifer Metcalfe
Healthwatch Co-ordinator
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Dear Ms Metcalfe

Draft report received from Healthwatch Stockton on Tees for comments from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust by 4 June 2021.
The Impact on Unpaid Carers – Living with Coronavirus/Covid-19. December 2020 – March 2021.

Thank you for providing the draft Report for our comment regarding factual accuracy of the content and comments on the recommendations made.

The information and narrative within the report has been helpful. We are always pleased to work with Healthwatch Stockton on Tees to continue to identify any improvements to our services, and to be given the opportunity to receive valuable feedback from our local population, particularly at such a challenging time. The impact the Coronavirus pandemic and the mental health and wellbeing of our patients and our local population is at the forefront of our mind when reviewing our services.

On review of the draft Report, I can confirm that we have no concerns regarding the factual accuracy of the report. Please find enclosed comments for you to consider with regards to the recommendations within the report in relation to our Trust (please find our comments enclosed on the Recommendations template you have provided).

We look forward to continuing to work closely with you in the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any clarity on the content or any further information.

Yours sincerely

Lindsey Robertson
Chief Nurse

Enc: Comments on Recommendations

Recommendations:

Recom mendat ion Number	Recommendation	Responsible body	Comments
1	Ensure that carers are able to take breaks and that the return of essential services are prioritised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 	
2	Place high priority on guidance, information and advice for carers that is adapted to their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council • NHS Tees Valleys CCG • North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust 	<p>The Trust provides patient information for our patients or their carer, nominated representative, in written format via patient information leaflets, appointment and clinic letters. We are able to provide this information in alternative ways such as braille, large font/coloured background and some leaflets are readily available in an easy read format. We have access to our contracted interpretation and translation provider 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in order to provide information in an accessible format for our patients.</p> <p>We understand the distress caused to carers whilst their relative is in hospital and, where carers wish to attend the Trust to support the care for their relative, the Trust can provide John's Campaign (to allow extended visiting rights for family carers of patients with dementia in hospital) to allow carers of patients to visit and support their loved ones, even when visiting has not been allowed as normal, due to Trust</p>

			visiting restrictions. The Trust extends the scope of this to include patients with learning disabilities and end of life care.
3	Prioritise carers health and wellbeing and deliver targeted mental health for carers and those that they care for.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust • NHS Tees Valleys CCG • Tees Esk & Wear Valleys Foundation Trust 	<p>The health and wellbeing of our patients is our priority. When reviewing our patients we undertake a full assessment of their individual circumstances as well as their clinical condition when making decisions around the urgency of their care.</p> <p>Where we believe patients/carers may benefit from mental health support we act as a signposting service to offer details of appropriate mental health services.</p>
4	Provide more guidance to care homes in relation to visiting policies, and to ensure priority in facilitating contact and communication between carers and those that they care for.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 	
5	Delivery of healthcare appointments that take into account the different communication needs of carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust • NHS Tees Valleys CCG • Hartlepool & Stockton Health Ltd 	<p>There has been a National Public Health Campaign and also local communication from the Trust encouraging patients to continue to attend appointments and the Emergency Department if they need to access our services.</p> <p>The Trust are now delivering around 65-70% of our appointments face to face. With the remaining being via telephone or in a minority of cases, a video call. We are aiming to deliver health care</p>

			<p>to patients in a form that is meaningful to them and values different preferences.</p> <p>With regards to communication with our patients who have sensory loss, we are now able to identify this via an icon, on our patient information system (Trakcare). This is visible to all staff to ensure our patients are communicated with in a form that is accessible to them.</p> <p>Additionally, where English is not the first language the Trust have a contracted provider for interpretation and translation services, which are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This includes virtual translation in our out-patient areas with a plan to develop this to our in-patient areas in the near future.</p>
6	<p>Health and Social Care Services to provide appropriate and regular contact and communication with carers to support them in their caring role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council • North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust 	<p>As mentioned, John's Campaign has been utilised within the Trust to allow carers to visit loved ones with a diagnosis of dementia or learning disabilities. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, this has continued to be available following discussion with the relevant ward matron.</p> <p>In addition to improve communication with relatives and carers the Trust have introduced clinical updates and courtesy calls (where family members/carers have requested an update on</p>

		<p>their loved one) and an update call is undertaken daily, a few times a week or weekly, depending upon the agreement with the family/carer.</p> <p>Virtual visiting has also been introduced where our patients are unable to facilitate a virtual call without assistance. Each ward has been provided with an iPad. The virtual calls are arranged via the Patient Experience Team and facilitated by ward staff via an iPad.</p> <p>The Trust also introduced a Letters of Love/personal possession drop off service. This allows relatives/carers to drop off letters and possessions at one central point in the Trust.</p>
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