

NHS LONDON Alignment toolkit

Examples of service developments/initiatives/projects

Title	Patient Information Service, Patient Information Team, Knowledge and Information Centre, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
Lead library	Patient Information Service within the Knowledge and Information Centre at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust www.gstt.nhs.uk
Summary of the service	The Patient Information Service provides patients, their relatives, carers and local people with access to high quality information on over 90 health conditions, support groups and local services to enable them to make informed choices about their health. Information is provided in a range of formats including books and leaflets, websites and touch screen kiosks. Our website provides a gateway to quality assured sources of information for patients and staff.
Partner organisations	
Key Audiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Patient being treated at Guy's and St Thomas', their families and carers2. People living locally in Lambeth and Southwark
Description of the service	<p>The Patient Information Service provides patients, their relatives, carers and local people with access to high quality information on over 90 health conditions, support groups and local services to enable them to make informed choices about their health.</p> <p>This cross site service is physically based at St Thomas' Hospital. Approximately 350 people come through the doors each day, half are patients, carers and visitors. Information is provided in a range of formats including books and leaflets, websites and touch screen kiosks.</p> <p>Patients can browse the collection independently or alternatively they can ask trained staff for help in finding the information that they need. We also offer a detailed enquiry service and can research more detailed information if required.</p> <p>We are currently piloting information prescriptions in a number of outpatient settings including the TIA clinic and a post-discharge cancer support programme. Work in development includes questions to ask your doctor and a patient guide to the internet and information seeking.</p> <p>We also work in partnership with colleagues to accredit externally produced patient information for use in the Trust, and support those wanting to develop their own information.</p>
Service	<p>People are able to browse the collection independently.</p> <p>Alternatively, they can ask trained member of staff at the Reception Desk for help in clarifying their information needs and identifying appropriate information sources. Requests for information are also received via telephone, web and email.</p>

Customer involvement

The Patient Information Service has a user group comprised of current and previous patients, local people, carers, volunteers and member of the foundation trust. The group meets on a quarterly basis to provide feedback on current services and make suggestions for service improvement.

The group also helped develop the research tools for the project to evaluate the impact of the patient information service. Two members of the user group also sit on the project steering group

Benefits of the service for the customer

1. Information on treatments and conditions can help patients become more involved in their treatment and care and enable informed choices. Research has shown that increased involvement in decision making can result in better health outcomes for patients.

This information can also help legitimise health conditions and help educate others such as family, friends and colleagues about the health condition the individual has.

2. Information on local services can help ensure people are part of the health and social care systems and access services such as GPs, dentists etc.

3. Information on support groups can help reduce isolating and reduce potential mental ill health by ensuring people can link and share experiences with others in a similar situation.

Benefits for the library/libraries

Puts staff in direct contact with patients and enables staff to gain a better understanding of patient experience.

Being seen by colleagues as value added service which can support and enhance patient's experience of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

Evaluation:

London Southbank University has been commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the patient information service in terms of both service delivery and impact of the information provided in helping service users manage their health. Early findings are promising

Feedback

Informal feedback and monitoring is also achieved via comments cards, letters from service users and promotional surveys.

"...it is very hard sometimes to find out about an illness, but here you can find out anything you want quickly" Outpatient

"Advice sessions on benefits as the patients I deal with are largely the low income group". Nurse

"Being referred to a support group ... an enormous help, particularly in the early stages. So often doctors just break the bad news to patients', but do not have the time or expertise to look after the emotional side." Outpatient

"Internet access, health information for patients, it is free and easily accessible" Allied Health Professional

Marketing	<p>A range of marketing methods including a regular “Ask KIC” feature in the Trust’s community magazine, our own publicity materials and ensuring we have a presence at Trust public event such as the Open and Trust AGM.</p> <p>Attend community events and given talks to local patient groups.</p> <p>We do need to do more marketing on an ongoing basis as the constantly changing NHS environment presents a challenge and we are keen to reach out more widely to the local community</p>	
Collaborative working	<p>A recent review of the service resulted in a merger with the PALS and Voluntary Services Departments to form one patient focused service. This has presented opportunities for additional working collaboratively with clinical colleagues within the organisation.</p> <p>We are keen to work with community partners in health and social care to explore options for extending our model of service provision into primary care.</p>	
Funding streams	<p>Originally funded by charity, the service is now Trust funded</p>	
Lessons learned	<p>It is important to collect monitoring data on the service and be proactive about publicising this to colleagues to both raise the profile of the service and demonstrate its value to colleagues.</p> <p>Take advantages of as many opportunities as you can to publicise you service but be aware that you can’t accept all invitations for collaborative working!</p>	
Sustainability; next steps?	<p>We are currently leading the development of a patient information strategy for the Trust, to try and ensure a clear and cohesive approach to patient information across the organisation.</p> <p>We will be working to implement the recommendations emerging from the evaluation project later this year and make improvements to services in line with user recommendations.</p> <p>We are also interested in exploring opportunities to work in partnership with primary care colleagues to pilot a community based information service.</p>	
Start date	<p>April 2004</p>	
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Related resources/links	<p>Website www.kic.gstt.nhs.uk</p>	
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