

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Empowering patients within the Extensive Care Service

The Extensive Care Service is part of the Fylde coast Vanguard and is designed for frail elderly patients with two or more long-term conditions who are at high-risk of an emergency admission.

Working closely with patients, the service aims to assist them to improve their health and wellbeing; support them to manage their own conditions and provide effective interventions when needed in order to better manage exacerbations of their conditions.

One of the key components of the care model is patient activation. The service teams' understanding of an individual's ability to contribute to the management of their own health and wellbeing is key to ensuring the success of this approach. The model is new, different and includes the development of a unique role - a 'wellbeing support worker'. These individuals are a consistent feature in a model which enables a fuller understanding of a patient's 'activation' ability so that engagement and support can be tailored appropriately.

The service has recently begun to introduce the use of the Patient Activation Measure (PAM) in order to understand the level of activation their patients present with and to inform the way in which they engage with patients. This understanding helps the service adapt their interventions so they are appropriate to the patient's current level of confidence, knowledge, and skills.

The tool helps the service to be more aware of a patient's ability and willingness to manage their health and wellbeing. This ensures that patients who are likely to be easily overwhelmed are not overloaded with information, and any goals set are achievable and small successes are built on.

Although it is still early days and the tool has not been in use for long, it has been well received by the team and they are already starting to see the benefits.

Previous to using the tool, the service sometimes struggled to identify specific goals with patients. PAM is helping to identify the most important 'problems' patients are experiencing at a much earlier stage of the process and therefore informing patient interventions more accurately, with targeted pieces of work. At a glance, you can see where the patient needs more directed support and their perception of who is responsible for their health care or not. Through a coaching approach, the service then works with the patients to build confidence and raise awareness.

One specific area where PAM has started to make a difference is around medication. The tool recently helped to identify that a patient was confused and overwhelmed with the amount of medication they had and its purpose. The patient had a recent hospital admission, was discharged with new medication, and was confused and worried about the changes. A pharmacist review was arranged and the outcome was that the patient reported feeling 'less worried and glad to get rid of all the old medication'. The intervention appeared to lessen the anxiety and confusion experienced by the patient.

As the patients achieve their goals, the service will put in plans for a safe discharge back to primary care. A final questionnaire is completed to ensure the patient's level of activation has improved and they feel empowered to self-manage their conditions. This allows for a clear indication of the progress the patient has made since being referred into the service. This will also form part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the service and of the key staff roles within it. This information will help to refine future iterations of the service and the New Models of Care programme.