

Survey of Complaints – Worcestershire Acute Hospitals

NHS Trust

About the organisation

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust provides hospital-based services from three main sites - the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch, Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre, and Worcestershire Royal Hospital in Worcester.

They provide a wide range of services to a population of more than 575,000 people in Worcestershire as well as caring for patients from surrounding counties and further afield.

Methodology

The Trust used the short version of the post-outcome survey, with each survey identified by complaint reference number so they link comments to individual complaints. They used the short version of the survey as they felt this would increase replies, and the post-outcome survey as complainants would be happier to reply once the investigation was completed.

The survey was administered by post with no reminders sent. All complainants were surveyed except those whose complaints involved deceased patients or particular issues such that receiving a survey was likely to aggravate them further. They also did not contact complainants who had come back to them with further concerns, or who had international addresses.

All surveys were sent at the beginning of the month. The sample included complaints where responses had been sent at least one month previously, which meant surveys were sent between 4-8 weeks after the final response.

What changed?

The new survey resulted in a return rate of 35% which was higher than previous surveys. Reaction from complainants was also more positive than before, and they found the template made it easier to collect data.

At this stage the Trust have only recently analysed complete data from the pilot to ensure they have a good indicative sample. As such they have not yet made any specific process changes.

What challenges were there?

The Trust initially found the toolkit complex which took some time to understand. There were also challenges in providing resources to administer the survey.

Useful learning for others

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust recommends reviewing the toolkit documentation thoroughly and working out what your organisation wants to do as minimum and then building upwards. The toolkit is designed to be implemented differently at local level and if elements seem as though they require unavailable resource or would not be beneficial Worcesterstshire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust would suggest not trying to implement them.

The Trust also recommends setting up a report using the complaint system to search for eligibility criteria and to pull out the mailing information required.