Quality of healthcare premises is captured in latest patient-led assessments

Annual patient-led assessments of non-clinical elements of care such as food and waiting areas have been published by NHS Digital¹ today.

Now in their sixth year, Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE)² involve teams going into NHS and private/independent hospitals to assess how the environment supports the provision of clinical care.

PLACE assessments are undertaken by teams of healthcare staff and members of the public. The public members of the team, who comprise at least half of the assessing team, are known as patient assessors³.

Their assessments⁴ look at areas such as privacy and dignity, food, hydration, cleanliness and general building maintenance, as well as the extent to which the environment is able to support the care of those with dementia.

An additional assessment of how well healthcare environments support the provision of care to those with a disability was introduced in 2016.

This assessment focuses particularly on issues of access such as wheelchairs, mobility (e.g. handrails) and signage, as well as provision of visual/audible appointment alert systems and hearing loops.

Read the full report

Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment 2018 - England

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. NHS Digital is the national information and technology partner of the health and care system. Our team of information analysis, technology and project management experts create, deliver and manage the crucial digital systems, services, products and standards upon which health and care professionals depend. During the 2017/18 financial year, NHS Digital published 275 statistical reports. Our vision is to harness the power of information and technology to make health and care better.

2. The aim of PLACE assessments is to provide a snapshot of how an organisation is performing against a range of non-clinical activities which impact on the patient experience of care - cleanliness; the condition, appearance and maintenance of healthcare premises; the extent to which the environment supports the delivery of care with privacy and dignity; the quality and availability of food and drink, and the extent to which premises are equipped and able to meet the needs of people with dementia and/or disability against specified criteria. The criteria included in PLACE assessments are not standards, but they do represent both those aspects of care which patients and the public have identified as important, and good practice as identified by professional organisations whose members are responsible for the delivery of these services, including but not limited to the Healthcare Estates Facilities Managers Association, the Association of Healthcare Cleaning Professionals and the Hospital Caterers Association.

3. The size of an assessment team is decided by the organisation undertaking the assessment. NHS Digital stipulates that the number of staff should not exceed the number of patient assessors. This means, in practice, that the smallest team would be three (one member of staff, two patient assessors) but there is no upper limit.

4. The assessment criteria, scorecards and guidance are available for download here: http://content.digital.nhs.uk/PLACE

5. The Disability assessment is only in its third year, so there are only three years of comparable data. The assessment looks at specific disability-related criteria, which are largely based on
questions that had already existed in the PLACE scorecards. It is not a full comprehensive environmental disability assessment.

6. For media enquires please contact media@nhsdigital.nhs.net or telephone 0300 30 33 888.