

The national regulator's inspection on how older people are treated and fed on two wards at St George's Hospital, Tooting

What CQC found when they inspected Herbeden and Caesar Hawkins wards against essential standards of dignity and nutrition.

Key findings from the inspection

St George's was judged to be **fully compliant** with both the dignity and nutrition standards - but to maintain this for nutrition, CQC **suggested** some improvements.

St George's was one of 100 hospitals inspected in this targeted programme. It was judged to be in a **middle band** with 34 other hospitals to which CQC also made suggestions for how to do better.

45 hospitals were in the top band as they were fully compliant, with no suggested improvements.

But there were 20 hospitals that did worse than St George's as they did not meet one or both standards and CQC has formally **required** them to make improvements.

More detail about the inspection – Who? What? When? How?

A CQC team, made up of an inspector, a nurse and an "expert by experience" made an unannounced visit in the middle of 2011 to check whether older people on two wards (Herbeden and Caesar Hawkins) were being treated well and were being fed properly. They were assessing compliance against two standards – dignity and nutrition.

The Dignity Standard

CQC says that to comply with this standard, people who use services:

- Understand the care, treatment and support choices available to them
- Can express their views, so far as they are able to do so, and are involved in making decisions about their care, treatment and support
- Have their privacy, dignity and independence respected
- Have their views and experiences taken into account in the way the service is provided and delivered

The Nutrition Standard

CQC says that to comply with this standard, people who use services:

- Are supported to have adequate nutrition and hydration.

More detailed findings – are older people at St George’s treated with dignity?

How the CQC team reported what they saw and what they were told by people using the service

We met patients at the hospital and their visitors. They told us that staff treated them with respect and that they were kind and caring. People told us that they had the care they needed and that their privacy was respected. One person said, *‘the staff are really nice and treat us well’*, another person told us, *‘they all put themselves out to please us’* and another person said, *‘they are wonderful, extremely kind and patient’*.

The atmosphere on the wards we visited was calm and peaceful. We saw the staff treated patients respectfully. They attended to their needs and treated them as individuals. Curtains to protect people’s privacy were used and we saw staff being careful not to disturb people or intrude on their privacy. Information about patients was displayed discreetly.

We saw staff offering people choices and listening to their response. The majority of interactions we saw were positive and people were asked about their wellbeing and enjoyment of food. The staff assisted people where they needed help and supported them to be as independent as they wanted. We saw two incidents where staff assisted people without communicating clearly or positively. This meant that these people did not have the information, choices and respect they should have done.

As part of the review we looked at the latest trust in patient and outpatient survey results, the trust’s annual quality self assessment of non clinical aspects of care and information from NHS choices (an information service about healthcare provision). These provided us

with information about what people who use the service think and what they have told the trust about this. In general people felt that their privacy and dignity was respected. Some people felt that there were areas where they would like more privacy, particularly when discussing their conditions. Some people made positive comments praising nursing staff for the quality of their care.

How CQC summarised their judgment against the dignity standard

Overall, the hospital was compliant with this standard.

The majority of people who use the service feel that their privacy and dignity are respected, their needs are met and they are given enough information to help them make decisions about their care and treatment. There are instances where people do not have a tailor made service and some of their needs are not met. However, the trust is working with patient representatives and staff to monitor and improve quality.

More detailed findings – are older people at St George’s fed properly?

How the CQC team reported what they saw and what they were told by people using the service

People who were staying at the hospital told us that they liked the food. They said that they had a choice and that their special dietary needs were catered for. People told us that they had enough to eat and they were able to request extra food at mealtimes. They had copies of menus which they showed us.

We observed lunchtime on two wards. On both wards the staff made sure the lunch time period was undisturbed so that people could eat their meals without medical intervention or visitors. All ward staff worked together to help serve meals and assist people who needed support. There were clear systems for making sure people had the food they had chosen, had the support they needed and were served hot food. Staff assisted people to open packages and supported people who needed additional help. Each person was given a fresh

glass of water with their meal and wipes so that they could clean their hands.

As part of the review we looked at the latest trust in patient and outpatient survey results, the trust's annual quality self assessment of non clinical aspects of care and information from NHS choices (an information service about healthcare provision) and we contacted Wandsworth LINK (Local Involvement Network). These indicated that people were generally happy with the choice, quality and quantity of food. However, there were some concerns patients have raised about food and nutrition.

How CQC summarised their judgment against the nutrition standard

People who use the service enjoy a range of quality food. They can make choices about what they eat and are generally satisfied with the variety, quality and nutritional balance. The trust is committed to working with patients and their representatives to improve mealtime experience, hydration and nutrition. They have addressed concerns and have a programme to make sure they are continually monitoring this area.

There are systems designed to identify when people may need additional support with nutrition or hydration however these are not always followed and people may be at risk because they are not getting the support they need.

Extracted from full inspection report by Wandsworth LINK
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