

PPI and Public Education: Annual Review 2009-2010

1. Introduction

The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust (LAS) is committed to patient and public involvement (PPI) and aims to involve patients and the public in all key developments, as well as through public education and other activities such as public fairs and events.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007) sets out the requirements and legal duties of NHS trusts to engage with service users and the public in the development, planning and delivery of health services.

The Standards for Better Health (Department of Health, 2004) form a key part of the performance assessment by the Care Quality Commission of all healthcare organisations. In terms of PPI activity, these standards include the requirement for organisations to have mechanisms for receiving patients' feedback and taking it into account when designing, planning, delivering and improving services. Another standard requires organisations to promote, protect and demonstrably improve the health of the community served.

Although external scrutiny and legislation provide a focus, and some guidance, on Trusts' responsibilities to involve and consult patients and the public, they are not the reason for involving them. It is only by involving patients and the public in a meaningful way that an organisation can provide services that meet the needs and expectations of users and enable them to influence the strategic direction, policies, practices and services provided.

As the only pan-London Trust, the LAS is in a unique position to involve a diverse range of patients and members of the public from a number of different areas. This report describes the key PPI and public education activities undertaken within the Trust in the last year.

2. Structure and Reporting

The Trust's approach to PPI and public education activity are set out in the *Action Plan for Patient and Public Involvement 2008–2012* and the *Public Education Strategy*. Activities are monitored in the PPI Committee, and the Public Education Strategy Steering Group is a sub-group of this committee. There are two sub-groups of the Public Education Strategy Steering Group: one to develop materials and resources for use in public education and the other to plan and develop the public education staff development programme.

The PPI Committee is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive (and previously during 2009-2010 by the Director of Service Development), and reports to the Clinical Governance Committee. A non-executive director is a member of the PPI Committee. The PPI Manager also provides information for the Chief Executive's report to the Trust Board.

A database has been created to record all PPI and public education activity. This is now available via *the pulse* along with a number of other resources to support staff taking part in public education work.

A paper describing a new prioritisation system for PPI and public education activities, for use at times of high demand, was introduced in April 2009. It was also adopted by the Equality & Inclusion team. A schedule of forthcoming PPI activities has also been produced and was approved at the October PPI Committee meeting.

The PPI Manager regularly provides information through the Performance Accelerator electronic tool, to ensure evidence is recorded for scrutiny purposes.

3. The Patients' Forum

Although Patients' Forums were replaced by Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) in the most recent legislation governing PPI, the LAS Patients' Forum resisted abolition and established itself as a limited company. The Trust has made a commitment to work with the Forum as it did before, until it has achieved Foundation Trust status.

The Patients' Forum continues to meet monthly in the LAS HQ Conference Room, and colleagues from across the Trust are invited to discuss a range of topics. In the last year, these have included quality standards for Patient Transport Services, learning from incidents and accidents, the annual health check, pre-hospital care and treatment, equality and diversity, the Olympics and the Foundation Trust application.

As LINKs are established in each of the London boroughs, members of those groups who are interested in the ambulance service have started to attend Patients' Forum meetings. This provides them with an opportunity to learn about the LAS, to take part in pan-London activities, and also gives the Trust an additional opportunity to engage with local people.

In August 2009 an induction meeting was held for new members of the Forum, many of whom are also LINKs members in their boroughs. Colleagues from across the Trust explained how their part of the LAS worked, and invited questions. The agenda was based on the information requested by new members. Topics included how we respond to 999 calls, PTS, the Foundation Trust application, the Trust's strategy and future direction, external factors affecting the Trust, equality and diversity, staff training and development, estates and buildings, communications and how we use feedback to improve our services.

Arrangements are currently being made to hold a special induction meeting for Patients' Forum members who wish to observe ambulance crews (on "ride-outs"), in the control room, and undertake ambulance station visits. Whilst wishing to encourage Forum members to develop their insight into the Service through these mechanisms, we need to ensure that these activities are handled sensitively (e.g. being mindful of the situations they may witness, and the impact their presence may have on our patients).

Patients' Forum members are involved in a number of the Trust's projects and initiatives (e.g. use of translation services, Patient Environment Access Teams, access for deaf people), having actually instigated some of them. Forum members also attend some of our key committees, including the Trust Board, PPI Committee, Feedback Learning and Improvement Group and the Clinical Audit & Research Steering Group.

4. Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

The Trust is keen to engage with LINKs, and sees the new statutory PPI structure as an opportunity for greater engagement with community and social care organisations. Developing relationships with the 32 LINKs in London also provides an opportunity for the Trust to recruit patients for PPI activities and Foundation Trust membership.

The Trust's general approach to LINKs is for these relationships to be managed locally. Details of all key local LINK contacts have been circulated to Ambulance Operations Managers (AOMs). Introductory meetings have been held this year with LINKs in some boroughs (e.g. Islington, Hillingdon and Hounslow), attended by the PPI Manager and the AOM for that area. The LAS has also been invited to participate in a number of larger public events organised by LINKs, notably in Tower Hamlets and Islington.

The Trust also plans to meet with LINKs as part of its plans for stakeholder engagement for the 2012 Olympics. One event has been held for representatives from the five Olympic borough LINKs, and members of the Olympic programme team are now arranging to attend LINKs meetings in those boroughs, to gain a wider perspective on local residents' views.

The Foundation Trust Membership Group has discussed how to work with LINKs and use them as a mechanism to engage with local people.

A break-out session at the Patient Care Conference (January 2010) focused on LAS involvement with LINKs, and the event was attended by a number of LINKs representatives. As mentioned in the previous section, a number of LINKs representatives also attend the monthly Patients' Forum meetings.

5. Foundation Trust membership activities

The LAS is currently in the process of applying for Foundation Trust status, and conducted a full public consultation between February and May 2009. The consultation focused on other aspects of our future plans, as well as that of becoming a Foundation Trust.

The LAS is now recruiting members, and has established a group which meets regularly to discuss communication and activities for members. This includes the introduction of a quarterly newsletter for FT members, *Ambulance News*, and plans to involve members in the Patient Environment Access Teams when they are established.

Other activities for members are to be set out in our Foundation Trust membership strategy, and will be reviewed as our members are elected to the Council of Governors.

6. Category C Service User Survey

In 2008 Picker Europe were commissioned by the Healthcare Commission (now the Care Quality Commission) to assess how changes in the way Category C calls are managed have affected patients' perceptions of ambulance care.

The national picture was very positive and the LAS also performed well overall. However, the scores were generally lower than those for other ambulance services and the free text comments highlighted a number of areas where improvements could be made. The survey findings contributed to the Service failing in the patient experience area of the Annual Health Check, despite achieving patient satisfaction scores of over 90%.

A group was established to explore the findings of the survey and take forward actions and recommendations arising from it. Most of these actions are either underway or planned within the Service Improvement Programme. Others are expected to be included in existing work programmes. A small number will require additional resources to achieve.

The action plan has recently been presented to the Commissioners, and is to be discussed by SMG in April 2010.

7. Community Involvement Officer role

As part of New Ways of Working (NWOW), a new role of Community Involvement Officer (CIO) has been created. There are currently two CIOs, at Chase Farm and Barnehurst.

The role has been designed to be flexible, so the post-holders can adapt to the needs of the local complex and the local population. As well as community engagement work, such as leading on the organisation of Junior Citizen Schemes in their areas, the CIOs also undertake partnership activities with other agencies. For example, in Barnehurst the CIO has created alternative care pathways for patients, and is involved in a number of local health and social care forums. At Chase Farm, the CIO set up information-sharing meetings with care home and GP surgery staff.

The CIOs also take a lead on managing frequent callers in their areas, and encourage other staff from their complex to get involved in engagement and partnership activities.

8. Olympics

A timetable for PPI and public education activity in the run-up to the Olympics has been developed and agreed by the Project Board. A method has also been devised to identify PPI and public education events where Olympic messages can be included.

As described above (point 4) representatives from the five Olympic borough LINKs were invited to a meeting to discuss the Trust's plans for the Olympics. This was not well-attended, and individual meetings with each of the five LINKs are now being arranged.

One of the project managers for the Olympics programme gave a presentation to the Patients' Forum in May 2009.

Links have been made between the Trust's public engagement activities that relate to the Olympics, and staff training plans. For example, the Media Resources Unit is working with the Olympic team and external partners to produce a number of videos to be used to support staff training. These include wheelchair-handling skills, working with people with pre-existing spinal cord injury including aspects specifically related to wheelchair bound athletes, deaf and deaf/blind awareness, and relating to people with learning disabilities.

9. Prince's Trust

An open day was held in April 2009 for staff interested in working for the Prince's Trust on a secondment basis. Over 40 staff took part in the event. Later in the year, a second event was held for a further 'wave' of secondments and short-term placements. So far, 20 members of staff have been selected for these opportunities.

As well as the benefits for the young people involved, releasing staff for secondments to the Prince's Trust provides an opportunity for their own development, and also benefits the Trust when they come back into their core roles.

An event is now being planned for all the LAS staff who have been seconded to the Prince's Trust. At this meeting they will be able to discuss their experiences, and it will be considered how best to use their new knowledge and experience within the Trust. For example, they may be the ideal group of staff to get involved with knife crime events and other public education activities involving teenagers and young people.

10. Tower Hamlets

The Tower Hamlets Project is overseen by a steering group, which meets bi-monthly.

As part of the Tower Hamlets project, regular basic life support training sessions are held in local Children's Centres for women with babies and young children. Feedback received following these sessions is always excellent.

Through our contacts in the area we have also been invited to other local health events, and a session was recently held for 67 Imams, who are very influential community leaders.

Following the implementation of Get the Right Treatment in 2008, the original DVD produced by the Media Resources Unit is being updated. A new DVD for children and young people is also now being developed by the Media Resources Manager to show them how to access health services in the area, using a number of scenarios. Students at a local Tower Hamlets school are to be involved in the development of this project, assisting with identifying key issues for them, and helping to develop the scenarios used within the DVD

so that these are relevant and appropriate to the age group. They may also be able to take part in the filming. The school has welcomed the opportunity to participate in this with the LAS as it fulfils a number of core curriculum requirements for them

11. Public Education Strategy

A Public Education Strategy was first developed in 2006. This recognised that a great deal of public education activity was undertaken within the LAS, with many people involved. However, there was a lack of communication and co-ordination regarding this activity. The strategy outlined a method of drawing those involved in public education together, working on common target groups and messages and with shared resources.

The implementation of the strategy is overseen by the Public Education Strategy Steering Group, which works to an annual action plan. Sub-groups of the Public Education Strategy Steering Group look at materials and resources and the staff development programme.

In the last year, the following key elements from the strategy have been achieved:

- The public education staff development programme, which had been piloted between October 2008 and January 2009, was evaluated and rolled out to the second group in October and November 2009. This was extremely successful, and the next course is planned for June and July 2010.

The aim of the programme is to support and develop staff who are involved in public education work, and provide them with a network of contacts from other parts of the Service. It is now an eight-day programme, and includes training in presentation skills, risk assessment, diversity, communication and key messages, deaf awareness, reflective practice, personality types, media interviews, policy and resources, and planning a public education session.

- The introduction of the role of PPI & Public Education Co-ordinator has ensured the Trust's PPI and public education activities are recorded on a database and that the staff involved are supported with the information and resources they need.
- The Risk Assessment and Checklist for LAS Staff attending Public Events & School Visits (LA168) has been reviewed, redesigned and re-launched. Familiarisation with the new form is part of the public education staff development programme.
- A new public education resource library has been developed, and is available on *the pulse*. It includes information about regular public education activities (e.g. Junior Citizen Schemes and the Tower Hamlets project), as well as links to relevant policies, lesson plans and the PPI and public education events database. There is also information about the materials available to support staff taking part in public education activities, and about the public education staff development programme. Finally, there is a "frequently asked questions" section and a list of useful contacts.
- A number of new materials and resources have been developed and purchased, via the materials sub-group. These include rulers, 'fuzzy bugs', pens, bookmarks, Oyster-card holders, display banners and new leaflets. These are maintained, and stock levels are monitored, by the PPI & Public Education Co-ordinator. Other materials still in development include multi-lingual CPR advice cards, knife crime awareness information and resources aimed at children aged 10-11 years. Children's (and teachers') pages are also being developed for the website, and the Media Resources Unit is looking at the development of a range of educational video resources that can be used on the LAS website and at events and school visits. The unit has already produced video material to support work we are doing around knife crime in Haringey schools.

- Through the public education strategy steering group and PPI Committee, priority target groups have been identified. These include teenagers (e.g. events focusing on knife crime and road safety), children (aged 10-11, when they attend Junior Citizen Schemes), the Bengali community in Tower Hamlets, people with learning disabilities, people in the Olympic boroughs, Category C patients and people with mental health problems.

In 2010 we plan to hold an event for people working on knife and gun crime events across London to come together and share information and ideas.

The PPI Manager is a member of the short-life Demand Management Group, advising on how the Trust can use public education messages to help manage demand. She has also taken part in the winter and flu planning campaign, working with the Communications Team to develop appropriate public messages.

- A review of the Events & Schools Team's activities has been conducted and work has commenced to re-brand and increase the capacity of the team. If funding is agreed, the new structure will increase the establishment of the team by one member, i.e. there will be three members of the team, each responsible for one of the areas of London. They are also likely to have a 'portfolio' of specific responsibilities within the topic and project areas covered by the team. The new team will be branded as the Public Education Team, rather than Events & Schools, to more accurately reflect their role.
- Regular team meetings are held within the PPI and Public Education Team, and the PPI Manager also has regular meetings with the Community Involvement Officers. As numbers of CIOs grow, these meetings will become a network, providing an opportunity for CIOs from across London to share information.

12. Patient Environment Access Teams

LAS is keen to involve patients and the public in new Patient Environment Access Teams that are being established. These teams will carry out infection control inspections in LAS sites and hospitals across London, and the LAS will be the first ambulance trust to introduce them. Members of the Patients' Forum and Foundation Trust members will be core members of these teams, taking part in inspections across London.

13. Patient Care Conference

The Patient Care Conference was held in January 2010 and focused on the theme of "engagement": of staff, partner organisations and patients. The conference was a mixture of plenary and break-out sessions, including the following topics:

- Table discussions about participants' experiences of consultation
- Staff consultation and involvement
- A debate on the value of responding to consultations
- Public accountability in the NHS
- Making experiences count
- Equality and Inclusion
- Measuring the quality of ambulance care
- The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)
- Patient Transport Services
- New Ways of Working
- The role of a Foundation Trust governor

Feedback about the event was generally very positive, with most delegates finding the conference informative and enjoyable.

14. LAS Museum

The Trust is currently in discussion with the GLA and the other emergency services in London about the development of a joint blue light services museum. While this exciting project is in the development phase, the museum at Ilford remains closed to the public and essential restoration and preservation work is being undertaken on some of the museum's vehicles.

15. Work Experience

In June 2009 the Trust hosted sixth form students from Barking & Dagenham to undertake a work experience project. They carried out an evaluation of the Trust's "Go Walk" campaign, which was very thorough and provided very useful information to help the Olympic Games Planning Team plan similar initiatives in the future. The LAS group won second prize for their report, against 14 groups of other students from across four schools in the borough.

16. Conclusion

The PPI Action Plan sets out the Trust's legal obligations and responsibilities as an NHS organisation to conduct PPI activity in a meaningful and consistent way, so that the service it provides meets the needs and expectations of its users, but also so that it can learn from them and include them in its strategic and service developments.

This is supported by the Public Education Strategy, giving the Trust a framework in which to prioritise and support public education activity across the Trust. Through this work there is a specific focus on ensuring that staff involved in public education work are supported with the knowledge, skills and materials to enable them to do so to maximum effect.

It is a challenge to undertake PPI and public education in a large, diverse city. However, these challenges also present the Trust with an opportunity to make a real difference through its PPI and public education activities, both to patients and carers, partner organisations, staff, and across networks in London and nationally.

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