Mental Health Act Annual Statement August 2010

Cornerstone House
(Vision Mental Health)

Introduction

The Care Quality Commission visits all places where patients are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. Mental Health Act Commissioners meet and talk with detained patients in private and also talk with staff and managers about how services are provided. As part of the routine visit programme information is recorded relating to:

- Basic Factual details for each ward visited, including function, bed occupancy, staffing, and the age range, ethnicity and gender of detained patients

- Ward Environment and Culture, including physical environment, patient privacy and dignity, safety, choice/access to services/therapies, physical health checks, food, and staff/patient

- Issues raised by patients and patient views of the service provided, from both private conversations with detained patients and any other patient contacts made during the course of the visit

- Legal and other statutory matters, including the scrutiny of Mental Health Act documentation, adherence to the Code of Practice, systems that support the operation of the Act and records relating to the care and treatment of detained patients.

At the end of each visit a “feedback summary” is issued to the Provider identifying any areas requiring attention. The summary may also include observations about service developments and / or good practice. Areas requiring attention are listed and the Provider is asked to respond stating what action has been taken. The response is assessed and followed up if further information is required. The information is used to inform the registration decisions

The Unit at Cornerstone House was visited on one occasion by the Mental Health Act Commissioner in 2010.

Background

Vision Mental Healthcare, an independent healthcare provider, delivers a rehabilitation residential service at Cornerstone House. The Unit is registered for 19 patients including one self-contained flat. The Unit opened in 2009 and it is not currently operating at full capacity. On the day of the Commission visit, there were thirteen patients in total, twelve of whom were detained. The Unit is slowly building up to full capacity and is currently assessing potential new patients to admit.

The Annual Statement provides an overview of the main findings from visiting, highlighting any matters for further attention and / or areas of best practice. It is published on the CQC website, together with other publications relating to individual mental health providers.

Main findings
Relations between the Mental Health Act Commission and the senior manager of the provider have been constructive throughout the reporting period. The Commission's visit to the unit this year was well received. Evidence was found that the provider had implemented recommendations made in the two visits that took place last year and that the provider has sustained good practice noted last year.

The Unit implemented recommendations made during the visits last year to improve the authorisation and administration of Section 17. The Unit now has a much clear method of recording the conditions for leave.

The Unit continues to provide a good standard of accommodation with a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere.

It is reassuring to note that detained patients spoke highly of their care and of the staff who looked after them. Patients have reported an improvement in both the availability and structure of diversional and therapeutic activities at the Unit. Full use of the garden is made, including a substantial plot for gardening activities.

Mental Health Act and Code of Practice
The following points highlight those Mental Health Act Issues raised by Commissioners on visits. The detailed evidence to support them has already been shared with the provider and is not rehearsed here. For further discussions about these findings please contact the author of this report via the Care Quality Commission at the Nottingham office.

The legal paperwork on the unit was found to be in good order and minor points for improvement were made following each visit.

Section 58
Following the visit to the Unit, the Commissioner made a recommendation for the Responsible Clinicians to record in full assessments of capacity when negotiating consent to treatment. The provider has committed to ensuring compliance in this area. However, this point was raised in the Annual Statement last year, so the Commission is keen to see this commitment realised through governance and systems.

Section 132
Good evidence existed on the patient records that staff review patient rights under the Mental Health Act on admission and at three-monthly intervals. Following the visit, a further recommendation was made that to ensure compliance with good practice and the Code of Practice, that staff should additionally review rights with patients at key points in their treatment plan. The Unit have outlined a plan to implement the recommendation.

Advocacy Service
The Unit receives both generic mental health advocacy and Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) service from the local advocacy provider. Information on the service is clearly displayed and the Unit provides information to patients on the service.

Patient Care
The patients that were interviewed were very complimentary of the care and treatment they received. Patient choice is evident in the activities programme, as well as through individual care planning for care and treatment.

Several patients reported the support they receive at key times when they are distressed. Staff were seen to be actively engaged with patients throughout the visit. Patients reported that support staff are there on a daily basis, and that helpful professional support is available through nursing staff who can provide more expert help with issues such as self-harm.

Forward Plan
- Mental Health Act Commissioners will continue to visit the provider in the coming year to monitor the operation of the Act and to meet with detained patients in private.

- They will work with other colleagues in the Care Quality Commission to develop an integrated approach to the regulation of the Trust's services.