



Tallaght Hospital Patient Survey Programme



Tallaght Hospital

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Foreword

Tallaght Hospital is first and foremost a place where people care for people. Given that the care we provide can come at some of the most difficult times in a person's life, every interaction in our hospital is crucially important to ensure a high quality patient experience.

The patient journey is about every interaction the patients have within the hospital. As a hospital that interacts with tens of thousands of people each year, it is vital that we capture the nature of these interactions and how patients experience our services. This is crucially important information which informs how we can improve our service.

We are privileged in Tallaght Hospital to have a Patient Advocacy Department and a Volunteer Services Department that are highly active and creative in engaging with the users of our hospital. Volunteers have supported our hospital since it opened in 1998. In that time, their unique contribution has evolved to include a variety of roles and functions which enhance our hospital's identity. We appreciate that both the development and roll-out of these surveys, which we believe to be one of the first of its kind in Ireland, requires a huge input from our volunteers. Our programme has been additionally enhanced by expertise from international patient advocacy organisations and colleagues in the NHS such as Southampton University Hospital who have a particular experience in gleaning and interpreting patient feedback.

Tallaght Hospital's Volunteer-Led Patient Survey Programme is built on our established tradition of engagement with the community that is central to our ethos. As CEO, I would like to thank all those involved in this very welcome initiative which is still in its infancy. It has been undertaken in the best traditions of our hospital and its results will play an integral role in shaping how we improve the care for those people who use our hospital.

David Slevin, Chief Executive Officer

Why Did We Develop Our Patient Survey Programme

At Tallaght Hospital we strongly believe in Patient Advocacy. As the demand on our services continues to grow we believe it is crucially important to ensure that all of our patients' voices are heard and responded to. We have provided a comprehensive patient advocacy service for many years. This was acknowledged in the recent publication 'Learning to Get Better' published by the Office of the Ombudsman.



What Did We Do

Before rolling out this patient survey programme we were keen to learn from best practice elsewhere. We were aware that NHS hospitals in England have been collecting and monitoring patient experience feedback for over 10 years.

Armed with this knowledge, we arranged a visit to Southampton General Hospital, who demonstrated to us how the collection of patient surveys using volunteers had expanded rapidly over the past few years into a sophisticated, well-organised system where over 400 patient surveys are completed per month covering a wide range of questions in a variety of settings.

Enthused by our visit to Southampton, we decided to develop a similar programme that would enable the hospital to capture patient feedback on a continuous basis, quickly highlighting areas for improvement as well as feeding back to our staff and management team areas that are working well for our patients in their healthcare journey. As part of this, we commissioned support from the Picker Institute as we were very keen to partner with an experienced patient advocacy organisation who had worked with other hospitals to help them roll out patient survey programmes.

Working with our Volunteer and Patient Advocacy Service our volunteers started to carry out our surveys. Using volunteers to ask the questions is extremely beneficial as it avoids introducing the level of bias which is commonly seen when the hospital staff ask the patients questions. There is often an inaccurate perception from patients that if they give a negative response to the staff that it will impact their care.

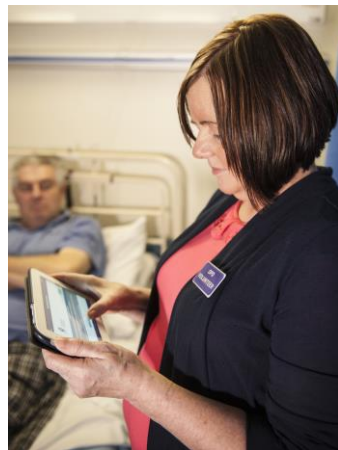
The Team and our volunteers



L-R: Dr Daragh Fahey, Caitriona Kelly, Elizabeth Kelly, Carol Roe, Carol Mullins, David Slevin



Teresa Quinn - Volunteer



Sandra Clifford - Volunteer

Survey Implementation

Between April and May 2015 an initial pilot study was conducted by the volunteers, collecting feedback from patients, visitors and staff about facilities and the overall environment of the hospital's main foyer ('the Atrium'). The volunteers completed questionnaires initially using a paper methodology, and feedback was entered into a data entry template in preparation for reporting and analysis. Response from this four week pilot was extremely positive, both in the findings from the survey but also feedback from the volunteers when engaging with patients and visitors to collect their feedback. However, it was concluded that using the paper methodology was a resource intensive process, as the completed questionnaires had to be collated and then the data entered. It was therefore decided to introduce hand-held tablet technology as part of the Patient Survey Programme.

Using hand-held tablets enables the hospital to simultaneously run multiple surveys, which can be programmed so that patients are only asked questions that are relevant to them, making complex surveys very quick and easy to complete, for both the volunteers and patients alike. The completed survey data is stored on the tablet devices until it is remotely uploaded for reporting and analysis. This provides a quick and efficient methodology for the continuous collection of patient experience feedback.

All of our volunteers were quickly trained on how to confidently approach patients and conduct interviews using the easy to use hand-held tablets. The training comprised of learning techniques to ensure that no bias was introduced whilst conducting the survey, as well as training on how to navigate and use the tablets. All of the volunteers now prefer using the handheld tablets compared to the paper based approach.

Continuing on from the success of the Atrium pilot study the hospital developed a survey to obtain feedback from patients in relation to their experience as an inpatient at the hospital. Tallaght Hospital mostly used questions from the mandatory National Inpatient Survey, used by NHS hospitals in England, as a starting point.

These questions are all cognitively tested, so we could be confident of patient comprehension. The survey was further developed taking into account other key areas that the hospital and its stakeholders wished to focus on.



95%
of inpatients
said they
'always' had
confidence and
trust in the
nurses treating
them



Just **44%** of
inpatients reported
that they **'definitely'**
found someone on
the hospital staff to
talk to about their worries
or fears

The hospital adopted a similar approach when developing a survey to capture feedback from those attending the Outpatient Departments. In order to encourage patient participation and engagement, volunteers approached patients whilst they were waiting for their appointment. Patients were asked about their current and previous appointments.



98%

of outpatients said the doctor knew **'enough'** about their medical history

Just **17%**

of outpatients **were** given printed information about the hospital, prior to their appointment



Tallaght Hospital's adult inpatient and outpatient surveys were launched in July and September 2015 respectively. We are currently carrying out a postal survey of 1000 patients post discharge, which will be completed in early February 2016. This is the first time the hospital has undertaken such an exercise.

What Did We Find

During the period from 20th July to 23rd November 2015 Tallaght Hospital interviewed 426 patients across the hospital's adult inpatient wards and adult outpatient departments. One hundred and seventy-six patients who received care and treatment on the hospital wards responded to the inpatient survey, and 250 patients attending an outpatient appointment completed the outpatient survey.

Overall the feedback from both volunteers and patients has been positive, and the majority of patients approached have been happy to engage with the volunteers and complete the surveys. Discussions with volunteers have indicated that they found this engagement with patients and visitors to be a positive and rewarding experience.

Key findings from the Inpatient Survey

- 58% of inpatients rated the care they received as *excellent*, a further 26% rated it as *very good*, 10% gave a rating of *good*, 5% a rating of *fair*, and just 1% rated their care as *poor*.
- 42% of patients reported that they were *extremely likely* to recommend the ward they were treated on to friends and family needing similar care or treatment, with a further 43% *likely* to do so.
- The hospital scores very highly on elements of care such as cleanliness. For example, 98% of patients surveyed thought that the hospital room or ward was clean, and 96% of patients said that staff always cleaned their hands.
- High levels of confidence and trust in staff are evident, with 95% of the patients reporting they always had confidence and trust in nurses treating them, and 85% in the doctors.

Areas for improvement:

- 38% of patients said they experienced staff contradicting each other.
- 24% of patients reported that they **had not** found someone on the hospital staff to talk to about their worries or fears.
- 23% of patients said they **were not** given enough information about their condition or treatment.
- Fourteen patients (8%) reported that they **had not** been involved, as much as they wanted to be, in decisions about their care and treatment.
- Of those patients who had experienced pain during their hospital stay, nine patients (5%) felt that staff **did not** do everything they could to help control their pain.
- Eight patients (5%) said they **did not** get answers they could understand from doctors, when asking important questions.
- Of those who needed help, seven patients (5%) said they **were not** given enough help to take their medicines.
- Three patients (2%) said they **did not** have confidence and trust in the doctors treating them, with two patients (1%) not having confidence and trust in the nurses treating them.
- Two patients (1%) reported that they **were not** treated with respect and dignity whilst in hospital.

Key findings from the Outpatient Survey

- 36% of patients reported that they were *extremely likely* to recommend the outpatient department to friends and family needing similar care or treatment, with a further 48% *likely* to do so.
- The hospital scores very highly on elements of care such as interactions with doctors. For example, 98% of the patients surveyed said that the doctor knew enough about their medical history; a high level of patients (91%) reported that the doctor definitely listened to what they had to say; 89% definitely had confidence and trust in the doctor examining and treating them; 93% of patients completely understood what the doctor said.

Areas for improvement:

- Of those patients waiting for more than 15 minutes, from their stated appointment time, 45% **were not** kept informed of waiting times, but would have liked to have been. In addition, 33% **were not** told why they had to wait, but would have liked an explanation.
- A quarter of patients (25%) had been waiting more than one hour, from their stated appointment time, to see the doctor (at the time of being interviewed).
- Nine patients (17%) reported to be dissatisfied with the length of time they had to wait, from being referred by their GP, to attending their hospital appointment.
- 14% of patients said they **were not** given written information about the hospital, prior to their appointment, but would have liked information.

- When asked, thirteen patients (8%) reported that they had difficulty finding their way from the main entrance to the outpatient department.
- Four patients (2%) reported that they could not find a place to sit in the waiting area.
- One patient (2%) reported that they **were not** involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment.
- Two patients (1%) reported that their appointment was changed by the hospital, more than once, to a later date.

“I enjoyed taking part in the patient survey initiative because it was something different and gave the patients a chance to have their say about the hospital and the service they experience during their visit”

(feedback from one of our volunteers)

“Level of hospitality friendship and care was excellent couldn’t rate them high enough”
(comment taken from the inpatient survey, Sept 2015)

What Have We Done With The Results

The Project Team have been feeding back the results of the surveys to hospital ward and outpatient department staff to identify areas for improvement and implement action plans. This approach enables hospital staff to truly engage in the surveys being conducted across the hospital and take ownership of the results.

This has led to significant improvements across the hospital including the following:

- Improved Atrium signage planned for February 2016, with Outpatient Department signage to be updated in March 2016.
- Our website is currently being updated with much greater information being provided about the hospital and the individual departments which the patients might visit. Patients will be referred to this as part of their appointment letter.
- We are looking to expand our staffing levels within our pastoral care service, to ensure there are more people available for patients to talk to about their concerns and fears.¹
- The nursing staff are focusing on improved communication to patients in our outpatient department about their waiting times.
- There are a range of initiatives to reduce outpatient waiting times, including list validation, increased clinics and increased staffing.
- Uniforms for our volunteers have been introduced which will enable easier identification.

¹ The Pastoral care in Tallaght Hospital is provided by trained healthcare chaplains from the four main Christian traditions. Chaplains are available 24 hours a day. They offer spiritual, religious and emotional support for people of all faiths, traditions, philosophies and none. Pastoral care includes counselling, presence, a listening ear, prayer, arrangements for sacraments, support in decision making, advice relating to faith and advocacy.

These improvements should lead to a greater level of patient satisfaction as they use our service. The survey findings also provide a transparency and a baseline performance level which allows us to ensure we maintain our strengths whilst working on areas than need improving.

Planned Next Steps

With the success of the surveys that have been implemented over the past eight months, Tallaght Hospital is planning the following in relation to its patient survey programme for 2016:



- 1) At least two repeat inpatient, and outpatient surveys and one additional postal survey will be completed with additional questions focusing on areas for improvement.
- 2) Additional surveys will be carried out in the following areas and departments within the hospital:
 - a. February 2016: Paediatric inpatients
 - b. April 2016: X-ray Department
 - c. June 2016: Emergency Department
 - d. Aug 2016: Paediatric Outpatients
- 3) Topic specific surveys will be carried out on food quality (March 2016) and infection control (May 2016).

The results from these surveys will be reviewed monthly and include analysis at hospital and ward level. Key findings from our surveys will be published on our website.

This information will help the management team and staff to select focus areas to improve the quality of the patient journey. The transparency and insight afforded by these surveys will also help us to measure the impact of our improvements, track progress and monitor trends.

Contact Us

If you would like to find out more about Tallaght Hospital's Patient Survey Programme and our plans going forward please contact Carol Mullins - Patient Advocacy Co-ordinator/ Patient Survey Project Manager on 01 414 4709.