

Summary of Issues received by Healthwatch Richmond Relating to the HRCH Continence Service

1. Staff. There were generally positive comments about the staff delivering the service:

1.1. The staff at Teddington are great

1.2. People on telephone helpful

1.3. Very professional and caring nurses at Teddington Continence Clinic

Staff providing the service should be commended however people did express frustration at staff acting as gatekeepers, effectively rationing the service:

1.4. It would be nice if you could listen to us without the word cost coming up

1.5. Not having to fight to get amount needed

2. Product. The Attends products received negative comments:

2.1. The new nappies and incontinence pads being used are very poor quality...which resulted in rashes in a child.

2.2. ...it does not hold urine for long and it falls apart

2.3. Less absorbent Tear easily

2.4. Service is good, they arrive on time, people on telephone helpful. My mother has to double-up when she wants to go out because quality is so poor they leak- very embarrassing.

2.5. Rip easily, stickers do not allow reopen and closing, do not absorb well

2.6. Don't know if it is the quality or a result of the condition but the NHS ones don't work

The products that some people used previously do not have an equivalent in the new range. Some people have questioned whether the cost saving is worth the loss of quality or whether there may be an economic argument for using fewer better quality pads verses more lower quality ones. There is little evidence of patient involvement in the commissioning or tendering process which is regrettable.

3. Supply issues.

3.1. The inability to meet sudden changes in demand - such as when patients are acutely unwell - is a significant concern as it means that there are times when patients have an unmet need.

3.2. Inflexibility of supply is also demonstrated by the delay people experience between assessment of need and receipt of continence products.

3.3. The response from HRCH to this has been that patients should buy their own products on such occasions. We do not consider this to be an acceptable solution

4. Communication.

4.1. Some people using the service have experienced inconsistency in the information that they are provided, receiving different information from different members of staff. This is particularly true where information comes from other teams involved in continence e.g. community nursing, NHS Supply Chain

4.2. Service users are not always informed of the outcomes of their assessments, of whether or when they will receive continence products.

4.3. People do not always have a service in place at discharge from inpatient settings which creates anxiety. It is felt that inpatient facilities can sometimes leave patients with unrealistic expectations of the service that they can expect on discharge.

4.4. Both patients and staff have sited communication between LBRuT and HRCH as needing improvements.

5. There is confusion around the disposal of incontinence products.