Patient's "feel safer" thanks to bay nursing trial

08 January 2014

Patients on one of the Trust's elderly care wards have reported greater satisfaction with services, thanks to a new strategy for assigning nurses to bays for an entire shift.

Feedback from patients and relatives indicates that bay nursing makes patients “feel safer, and more involved” in the care being given to them.

Ward sister Louise Hewson introduced the idea, which sees bays constantly supervised by a dedicated nurse and healthcare assistant. The system is being trialled in two bays on the ward.

Louise’s team cares for elderly patients, many of whom suffer from dementia. This places additional pressure on staff, as they need to continually monitor them to prevent falls and relieve confusion. Now, with nurses dedicated to each bay, the experience patients have, and the feedback received from relatives has improved dramatically.

In addition to having nurses placed with allocated patients, each bay now contains a desk, which patients are encouraged to eat around as a group. The nurses also coordinate activities within their bays to help patients be more sociable.

Louise explains some of the operational benefits of bay nursing:

“In the two months we’ve been nursing this way there have been no falls, which makes this a very safe way to care for people. We’ve also reduced the number of specialling requests made. In the months prior to bay nursing, we ordered over 300 specials per month – that went down to 80 following its introduction.”

Specialling refers to the act of supervising a patient on a one-to-one basis for long periods of time.

Bay nursing also seems to be having a positive effect on staff, with a reduction in sick leave being reported during the first month.

Louise said, “It’s good for morale. Staff feel more in control of their work and their area. They get more quality time with patients, and a better grasp of their workload means they’re more
able to help each other out.”