

Collaborative Working

To promote recovery from addictions...

Implementation of peer support within an Alcohol Liaison Nurse Service

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Aim

In 2016 there were 1265 alcohol related deaths across Scotland, an increase of 10% reported in 2015 (National Records of Scotland 2018). Early intervention and assessment of patients presenting to the acute hospital setting is essential to reduce health related harms associated with harmful use of alcohol. Increasing engagement in community addictions services is crucial to reducing alcohol related hospital admissions, associated health related harms and alcohol related deaths.

The Alcohol Liaison Nurse Service at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary is working with a third sector organisation, Alcohol & Drugs Action, aiming to increase engagement in community addiction services following discharge from hospital. We aim to achieve this by utilising volunteers in recovery from addictions to provide peer support in the hospital setting prior to discharge.



ADA CEO Fraser Hoggan, Volunteer Mark Craig Carol McDougall, Lead Alcohol Liaison Nurse

Methods

The project has been operational since February 2018 and to our knowledge is the first of its type within NHS Scotland. The Alcohol Liaison Nurses identify suitable patients for the volunteer to see through holistic, person-centred assessment during hospital admission. The volunteer in recovery is available to see patients in hospital three afternoons per week and two mornings per week is based at Alcohol & Drugs Action in Aberdeen City centre. This is to provide continuity, as the volunteer can arrange to meet the service user at Alcohol & Drugs Action prior to being introduced to a Substance Use Worker.

Results/Outcomes

62 Contacts with patients by the volunteer in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary from Feb 2018 - Feb 2019

5 Individuals who have engaged post-discharge have been seen more than once by the volunteer during hospital admissions.

28 Individuals have engaged with Alcohol & Drugs Action post-discharge from hospital.

Informal feedback has been very positive...

"He gave me hope when I felt there was none" (Patient)

"I found it easy to talk to Mark because he has been there himself and understands what I'm going through" (Patient)

"This approach to engaging with patients in the hospital setting has allowed us to reach people in real need and otherwise not in touch with our services, but importantly it has allowed us, through the volunteers efforts to keep them engaged in the service" (Alcohol & Drugs Action)

"I've got the best job in the world; I get to see patients becoming clients on their sometimes long and definitely difficult road to recovery.

I have been accepted by all departments as just another hardworking team member, trusted to do my job to the best of my ability and not just as a recovering alcoholic" (Volunteer)

"Having the opportunity to work alongside a volunteer with lived experience of recovery from addiction has improved the care that the Alcohol Liaison Nurse Service provides to patients in the acute hospital setting.

It is fantastic to see the number of patients who have engaged with Alcohol & Drugs Action post-discharge from hospital as part of their ongoing recovery journey following their contact with our volunteer" (Alcohol Liaison Nurse)



Conclusion/next step

This collaborative working project between NHS Grampian and Alcohol & Drugs Action is still in its infancy having only commenced in February 2018. This project has been successful so far based on the data collected on numbers of people who have engaged at Alcohol & Drugs Action post-discharge from hospital. The verbal feedback we have had so far has been very positive. We plan to formally evaluate the project with the assistance of the Department of Public Health, NHS Grampian.

As the Alcohol Liaison Nurse Service continues to expand and develop within Aberdeen Royal Infirmary our aim is to increase the numbers of patients seen by our volunteer prior to discharge. We will continue to gather and analyse data on engagement rates post-discharge from hospital. There may also be scope to recruit additional volunteers in recovery to provide a 5 day service within the hospital setting and Alcohol & Drugs Action in the community. We would welcome this model of integrated working to be replicated within other NHS Scotland Boards.

References

National Records of Scotland (2018); Alcohol-Related Deaths (Old National Statistics Division). <https://nrscotland.gov.uk>

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ROAD TO RECOVERY