

June Trust Board – Patricia’s Story

At June’s Trust Board a patient story from Patricia, carer, was told by Louise Hussian, Patient Advice and Complaints Manager.

The story was about Patricia’s experiences of mental health services. Patricia wasn’t happy with the support her daughter was receiving and raised a complaint with the Trust. She felt that her daughter needed additional support and found her communication with some services unsatisfactory. Overall her experience was that she felt she was not being listened to and that her views and expertise as the carer were not being taken into consideration.

Whilst the investigation of the complaint found that Patricia’s daughter had been offered appropriate support in response to her needs, action was taken to improve Patricia’s experiences as a carer.

As a direct result of Patricia’s experience and feedback the following has happened:

- A new carers assessment was undertaken
- Patricia will now be included in future care planning reviews of her daughter
- Patricia was provided with contact details for the Trust’s Carers Hub and for voluntary organisation which offer vital support to carers
- The Trust’s Single Point of Access service is reviewing its communication guides so that they can better support carers

Patricia said: *“Overall, the complaint has been a positive experience. The improvements are more important than the complaint itself and I am hoping staff can benefit from my expertise and that others in a similar situation will benefit too.”*

The following key points were highlighted during the Trust Board discussion:

- Whilst the story demonstrates how the Trust responds positively to complaints, it is important that any actions implemented as a result of a complaint are reviewed to make sure these remain effective;
- There is a need to increase the number of service users and carers taking part in service redesign groups.
- There is a need to improve communication processes with carers; and
- The Trust works closely with other agencies (such as the police) to ensure the care needs of those people suffering from mental health problems are met.

We have already signed up to the Triangle of Care scheme which is based on the principle that care is made better by making sure that there are good working relationships and communication between the service user, the professional and the carer.