

Case study: Guy's and St Thomas NHS Trust

Patient involvement in service developments in Guys and St Thomas

In Guy's and St Thomas' there is a core group of patients (of about 10) who have been assisting the programme in developing new materials, for example condensing all the existing foot care leaflet into one and restructuring the clinic letters at the hospital to incorporate agenda setting, goal setting and follow up. The project manager for Co-creating Health says that patients help them to make sure they use the right language and plain English.

Patients have also been involved beyond this and the project manager said they always ask patients about new initiatives. 'Staff get so engrossed in what they're doing they don't always consider what's best for patients... We do try to involve them as much as possible.'

The Co-creating Health team have also involved patients in their service improvement work and they came up with various suggestions. As a result of this they played a key role in designing 'My Health Plan', which is an aid for people in planning for their appointments. It is an A4 sized paper folded in half, which has space for patients to write down what they want to talk about with their health professional; what the most important thing is that they want to get out of the appointment; their goals, and how and when they will achieve them. This is now professionally printed and is used as a service improvement tool in surgeries when they are starting CCH.

The project manager said:

'Patients provide a common-sense view and stop the programme getting caught up in bureaucracy – a fresh-eyed approach. Often the programme will try to make big changes but actually small changes can bring about huge improvements.'