



# Commitment to Customer Care

Providing a high quality patient experience



**The Commitment to Customer Care Guide has been developed in collaboration with staff, patients, carers, Governors and the Institute of Customer Service.**

The aim of the guide is to develop a set of core and supporting standards to ensure that every patient or visitor of our Trust receives a first class service which reflects the high level of care provided at STH.

- The points in blue indicate essential standards

- The points in light blue indicate additional /useful standards

## Commitment to Customer Care

# Our promise: At Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, all receptions will...

- be welcoming
- be respectful
- be helpful
- be informative
- be understanding
- be professional
- be proud of our environment
- work with others
- keep improving
- be committed

# Be welcoming...

First impressions are often lasting and play an important part in influencing a patient or visitor's overall view of our services. The first personal contact will often be at reception and it is vital that this encounter is a positive one.

- Acknowledge all patients or visitors as soon as they approach the reception desk
  - Give a warm welcome by being friendly and courteous, always with a smile and making eye contact
  - When answering the phone, wish the caller 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon', and clearly say the name of your department and your own name
- Answer the telephone within six rings

I was acknowledged as soon as I arrived and was greeted with a smile; straight away I felt at ease

I had to wait while the receptionist had a conversation with another member of staff.

She wasn't very friendly - there was just a bored look on her face

# Be respectful...

All patient and visitors have the right to privacy and to be treated with dignity and respect. We should treat all patients and visitors in a kind and compassionate way.

- Identify how patients and visitors prefer to be addressed and make an effort to use their names
- When speaking to a patient or visitor give them your full attention
- Have manners: always say 'please' and 'thank you' and don't talk over someone or interrupt them
- Apologise if something goes wrong or if there are any delays
- Treat everyone as an individual and give patients/visitors the opportunity to communicate their preferences

The receptionist was very polite, asked me to confirm some simple details and explained what would happen next. I felt I was in good hands

He often asked me questions whilst looking at his computer screen, it was a little off putting. He seemed very distracted

# Be helpful...

Patient and visitors rely on staff to provide directions, and to give information and assistance in all aspects of their hospital journey.

- Ask if people need help, especially if anyone appears lost
  - Always check you have understood what people want and don't make assumptions
  - Ensure you are always visible behind the desk during your working hours
  - Provide patients and visitors with useful accurate information such as giving clear directions and providing maps
- If you are unable to help, find someone who can

She explained where to go verbally and was very helpful, then gave me a flyer to ensure I didn't get lost

The receptionist had a 'couldn't care less' attitude to their work or patients

# Be informative...

It is not always possible to keep everything running to time, however we can always give some indication about how long someone might need to wait or how long something might take to complete.

- Upon arrival, notify all patients and visitors of approximate waiting times, keep them updated whilst they are waiting and give reasons and an apology for any delays
  - Offer clear information on where to get refreshments and where the nearest toilets are located
  - Respond to answer phone messages within 1 working day
- Provide patients / visitors with accurate and helpful information to give them the best chance to be on time for appointments
  - Where possible give timescales for example the approximate waiting time for an appointment from GP referral

I was unsure where to get a drink and was worried I would miss my appointment if I left but receptionist was very helpful

I was a little unsure why I was waiting or how long the wait would be. None of the waiting times screens were working

# Be understanding...

Patients are often anxious when coming to hospital. They may not clearly explain what they want or fully hear what is being said to them. It is important that we understand this.

- Put yourself in the patient's shoes, and consider how you might feel if you were them
- Use plain language and avoid using jargon for good communication
- Check that patients and visitors understand what is being said
- Allow patients and visitors time to explain or express how they feel

- Clearly explain to patients/visitors that sometimes staff need to request specific information to be in a position to offer assistance and the best service possible

The receptionist was very polite and helpful. She really wanted to know what I needed and how she could help

Felt I was intruding when asking questions. I didn't understand what I was being told

# Be professional...

It is often the small things that influence a patient's view of our services. Often they will remember the person that they are speaking to rather than what is being said to them. It is important to act professionally at all times.

- Ensure you are easily identifiable, your appearance is professional and your name badge is visible at all times
- Do not eat or drink at the reception desk
- Do not read newspapers or magazines at the reception desk
- Deal with difficult situations professionally, remain calm, stay polite and show empathy
- Ensure confidential details are kept safe and that information is shared only on a 'need to know' basis
- Don't have private conversations with colleagues around patients/visitors

I was impressed by how professional everyone acted. It allows you to trust them and I felt the information I shared was safe

Staff need to realise when their conversations become unprofessional. I remember them talking about what they would order from the Avon book



# Be proud of our environment...

The environment we work in can often influence a patient's opinion on the quality of service that we will deliver. It is important we keep this area clean, tidy and comfortable for those that use it.

- Keep reception desks and waiting areas clean, tidy and clutter free
  - Champion that we are *all* responsible for keeping the Trust clean and for picking up litter
  - Take responsibility to report faults with any equipment such as seats, lighting, drinks machines, etc
  - Ensure notice boards only display current, relevant posters containing information for patients and visitors. Never display hand written or personal notices
- Provide extra finishes where we are able to do so, such as plants, relevant magazines/newspapers, etc

The area was very clean and tidy, it was also bright and spacious - I was happy to wait in this area

Very cluttered area, lots of newspapers, magazines, etc... and the relief receptionist was eating an orange

# Work with others...

Often patients and visitors liaise with a number of different departments, the transition from one to another should be effortless for them.

- Work co-operatively with colleagues across the organisation and show the same level of respect that you would give to patients and visitors
- Be an active team player
- Work together with colleagues to get things done for the patient or visitor
- Support colleagues so that any member of staff can help and assist anyone else within the Trust

The receptionist was unable to help me but he contacted the relevant department, checked that they were the people I needed to see and gave me directions to get there

Would have liked to see more communication between staff; they seemed to all work independently

# Keep improving...

We should never stop looking to improve the service we deliver. It should be easy for patients and visitors to give us feedback and influence the services that they receive.

- Be aware of different methods of giving feedback available within the Trust, and be able to act on feedback received
- Know how to take feedback both positive and negative, remember all members of staff can take details of a complaint

- Learn from mistakes and use the views of patients and visitors to improve our service
- Learn from colleagues who you feel provide excellent customer care

I felt I was listened to, I know my views were heard and will make a difference

I wanted to make a complaint, but the receptionist was unable to tell me how to do this

# Be committed...

Excellent customer care can only be achieved across the organisation if we all commit to delivering it all of the time.

- Be consistent and go above and beyond expectations to deliver a high quality service at all times
- Be supportive of change, be open to new ideas, and part of implementing service improvements
- Lead by example, acting as a role model for new staff and an ambassador for the Trust

Every time I have to come to hospital I am always greeted by the receptionist with a smile and a hello. She remembers that I have been here before and is always very helpful

The receptionist actually walked me all the way to where I'd asked directions to - she was smart in appearance but had flip-flops on!

We would like to thank all the patients, carers, staff, and Governors who helped with the production of the Commitment to Customer Care.

For more information please contact the **Patient Partnership Department**.

Members of



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