

Patient and public engagement in Thames Valley, Wessex and the South West



Purpose

- Optum™ engages with patient and public groups to ensure care is appropriate, patient-centred and supports the needs of the local health population. Above all, engagement facilitates and enhances patient choice, which is a cornerstone of the NHS Constitution.

Our approach

I. Thames Valley and Wessex Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

As part of the pathway review work in Thames Valley and Wessex CCGs (TWCCGs), the Optum team identified an ongoing cost pressure in complex spinal surgery activity at a particular London Trust. On further investigation and through liaison with the clinical team at the Trust, it became evident that the highly expensive surgery being provided was experimental and a service development with no evidence of improved outcomes that had not been negotiated with the TWCCG commissioners. As this experimental surgery was not part of the local commissioning priorities, the Optum team decommissioned the service at the Trust and contacted each of the patients with future admission dates to arrange suitable alternative treatments at local (non-London) providers. Although this led to a number of complaints, an effective engagement exercise followed. Each patient was written to directly, followed by a direct phone call (with follow-up calls as necessary). The communication with the patient established the need for the change in provider, provided a new admission date and reassured the patient in terms of the service and outcomes at the local Trust. This proved to be very effective and all patients subsequently changed their decision to move to the local Trust.

II. NHS Bristol and the South West Specialised Commissioning Group

During our review of renal services for NHS Bristol and the South West Specialised Commissioning Group, Optum attended patient forums to understand the patient's perspective on current provision of care and identify any areas which required review. Feedback from the patient groups was incorporated into the final service specification. The final specification was presented during a key stakeholder workshop which included patient representation along with clinicians, commissioners and operational staff. This approach ensured that patient views were considered and incorporated into the service design process, and ultimately will see the tangible benefits of any improved service provision.

Key benefits

- Enhances patient care and experience.
- Informs commissioning models.
- Augments decision-making.
- Ensures transparency to reduce anxiety.
- Patient and public proactivity sets foundation for future improvement.
- Effectively engages with patients to design services.



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