



National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey: *End of Project Report*

Date: November 2024

Contents

Project background and scope	2
Project aims	2
Project overview	2
Recommendations	6
Acknowledgements	6
Additional Information	7
Background	7
National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey results: Summary of national averages	7
Feedback Survey Results	13
Example Improvement Projects	16

Project background and scope

The national Radiotherapy Network Managers group facilitated the National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey in September 2023, on behalf of NHS Providers delivering radiotherapy in England. The survey supported the aims of the Service Specification for [Operational Delivery Networks for External Beam Radiotherapy Services](#) and [Achieving World Class Cancer Outcomes: A Strategy for England 2015-2020](#) to improve people's experiences across the pathway.

From the 11 Radiotherapy networks in England, 10 participated in the survey with responses received from 51 radiotherapy centres. The South West Radiotherapy Network and all radiotherapy centres within the network chose not to participate in the survey.

A total of 2,506 responses to the survey were received. There were 38 responses where the radiotherapy centre was not specified.

Project aims

The aim of this project was to develop and conduct a National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey across Providers in England. Once completed Network and department level reports would be provided by the project team.

These reports would allow Providers to:

- Benchmark departments against other radiotherapy departments in England.
- Identify opportunities for improvement in local radiotherapy departments radiotherapy services and networks.
- Meet the requirement to measure patient experience as set out in the Service Specification for External Beam Radiotherapy.

Project overview

Development

The survey was co-produced with patient representatives, representatives of the Radiotherapy Service Managers group and Radiotherapy Network Managers group in England. The survey was shared widely with radiotherapy professionals and academic partners, including the Radiotherapy Advisory Group; ethical approval from Birmingham City University and the Health Research Authority (HRA) via the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS).

Survey Design

A digital survey was the preferred method of delivery. The digital survey was hosted by the Christie NHS Foundation Trust on SmartSurvey.co.uk, a UK-hosted cloud-based survey platform which met all the necessary NHS digital compliance requirements. Trusts were able to choose their preferred methods of promoting the survey locally. This included:

- a QR code/website link, publicised via posters in the department.
- a mobile device in the radiotherapy department
- a text message/email link to patients

An electronic copy of the survey was provided by the national survey team which could be printed locally to avoid digital exclusion of patients. It also enabled departments to participate where a digital survey was not possible due to IT difficulties.

Where paper copies of the survey were completed, it was the responsibility of the department to upload this data to the digital survey platform. Due to a paper-based survey being available, none of the questions in the digital survey were mandatory.

Topics, number, and type of questions included in the survey are summarised in the table below:

Topic	Number of questions	Response options
Radiotherapy Centre details	1	Multiple choice
Consent	4	Multiple choice and free text
Written information provided before your radiotherapy	3	Multiple choice and free text
Online information about radiotherapy	2	Multiple choice and free text
Coming to the hospital for radiotherapy	5	Multiple choice and free text
About your radiotherapy appointments	10	Multiple choice and free text
About your experience of your radiotherapy appointments	5	Multiple choice and free text
About your experience of having radiotherapy	3	Multiple choice and free text
About you	10	Multiple choice and free text
TOTAL	43	

Implementation

Implementation of the survey was overseen by a national survey team consisting of a patient representative, representatives from the Radiotherapy Network Managers group, radiotherapy professionals and academics.

All radiotherapy departments in England were invited to participate in the survey. All adult patients (aged 18 and over), who completed a course of radiotherapy at participating departments between 4th September 2023 and 29th September 2023 were eligible to complete the survey. The survey remained open until Friday 6th October to allow eligible patients an opportunity to submit their responses.

Completion of the survey was completely voluntary and anonymous. Patients were reassured that they did not have to take part and were not asked to provide any personal identifiable information.

Results

For the purposes of reporting and analysis, the total number of responses received was 2,487.

Some positive highlights and areas for improvement from the national averages as follows:

- When giving consent, 87% of respondents (n=2,461) completely understood the aim of radiotherapy (range 67% to 90%).
- 78% of respondents (n=2,363) completely understood the early/short-term effects of radiotherapy compared with 63% of respondents (n=2,357) who completely understood the late/long-term side effects.
- 70% of respondents (n=2,417) rated access to drinking water as excellent (range 58% to 83%)
- Only 44% of respondents (n=2,352) rated access to other refreshments as excellent, ranging from 31% to 63%.
- 98% of respondents (n=2,427) said they were treated with dignity and respect in the department generally (ranging from 65% to 100%)
- Overall, 86% of respondents (n=2,451) rated their care as excellent, although this ranged from 67% to 92%.

Reports

Department level quantitative reports: Produced by the Survey Project team in November 2023. Radiotherapy departments were provided with the data submitted as part of the survey. The report was designed to:

- Provide quantitative data that could be used by departments to identify possible areas for future quality improvement within their service.
- Enable radiotherapy departments to identify positive themes.
- Enable radiotherapy departments to identify areas for improvement.

Enable radiotherapy departments to track changes in patient experiences of care over time. Free text responses for all departments were also shared. These responses provide essential feedback beyond the constraints of closed questions.

Network Level reports: Produced by the Survey Project team in May 2024 and distributed to Radiotherapy Network Managers to be shared with Radiotherapy Service Managers. These reports provided a breakdown of the responses within each network by radiotherapy centre and satellite centre (where applicable). A national average was provided for comparison. These reports were designed to provide quantitative data that could be used by departments to identify possible areas for future quality improvement within their service.

Peer review paper: The purpose of this paper is to summarise the themes identified from the survey. The aim is for this paper to be submitted to the Radiography Journal in November 2024 for consideration for publication.

Feedback survey

In order to understand experiences of running the survey, usefulness of the reports in identifying areas for improvement and gauge the level of support for running the survey again, a short survey was undertaken.

This was shared with all Radiotherapy Network Managers and the Chair of the Radiotherapy Service Managers group for onward circulation to all Radiotherapy Service Managers. The survey was live from 25th October to 6th November 2024.

A total of 14 responses were received, all from network managers or Radiotherapy Service Managers whose centres/networks had participated in the national survey. Responses were equally split between Radiotherapy Network Managers Radiotherapy Service Managers which is a low response rate of around 14% for Radiotherapy Service Managers.

The majority responded positively about information provided during planning and preparation (very satisfied = 46%, satisfied = 46%), communication from the project team before the survey (very satisfied = 54%, satisfied = 31%) and communication and support while the survey was open (very satisfied 46%, satisfied = 31%).

77% of respondents implemented both digital and paper-based methods and the majority found it easy (46%) or very easy (15%) to implement. However, some respondents reported that implementation was difficult (23%) or answered neutral (15%) to this question.

The next questions related to the usefulness of the reports provided to networks and Providers following the national survey. Most respondents reported that the centre-level quantitative reports were used (46%) or very useful (31%), network-level quantitative reports were useful (62%) or very useful (15%), and the free-text responses were very useful (31%) or useful (31%). However, there were also respondents that reported these reports weren't useful; 23% for the centre-level report wasn't useful, 15% for the network-level quantitative report, 23% for the free-text responses.

Responses to questions about identifying areas for improvement, developing action plans and undertaking any specific quality improvement projects were mixed, with only 17% (n=2) stating that reports had "completely" helped to identify areas for improvement and had developed an action plan and only 8% (n=1) had undertaken any specific quality improvement projects.

There was however strong support to run the National RTPES again in the future, with 83% of respondents answering "yes" and 17% unsure – no respondents answered no to this question. Of the 10 responses to the question, 4 suggested the survey should be run annually, 5 biennially and 1 every 3 years.

Recommendations

A National patient experience survey can be a valuable resource for service leads and professionals to compare radiotherapy services against other providers of similar size and configuration, identifying areas of best practice and benchmarking services against national averages. This approach would support NHSE's vision for improving the quality of radiotherapy, to reduce variation and enhance patient experience.

This report serves as a call to action for the radiotherapy community to commit to undertaking National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Surveys in future to continue to work together, sharing learning and good practice, to improve the quality of radiotherapy services and improve experiences of radiotherapy for patients.

Feedback suggests support for a survey to be undertaken annually or biennially. Due to the amount of time required to develop quality improvement plans and implement changes following the publication of data and reports, the recommendation from the Survey Project team is for the frequency to be no less than biennially and would require investment and support to facilitate this.

Acknowledgements

This has been a successful collaboration between many stakeholders towards a shared aim of delivering a National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey, designed to support providers to improve radiotherapy service and experience for patients.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in developing the questions to be included in the National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey.

Thank you to radiotherapy providers who participated in the survey.

For further information, please contact:

Daniel Hutton Northwest Radiotherapy Network daniel.hutton1@nhs.net
 manager

Katy Lowery Northern Radiotherapy Network katy.lowery@nhs.net
 Manager

Michelle Bates East of England Radiotherapy Network michelle.bates@nnuh.nhs.uk
 Manager

Circulation

To:	Radiotherapy Network Managers, Radiotherapy Board, Royal College of Radiologists (RCR), Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM), College of Radiographers (CoR), National Programme of Care (Cancer) team, National Patient Experience team, Care Quality Commission.
For onward circulation by Network Managers to:	Network Oversight Group members, Cancer Alliances,

Additional Information

Background

The Cancer Patient Experience survey was designed to monitor national progress on cancer care and provide information to drive local quality improvements. The first survey was undertaken in 2010 and is conducted by Picker Institute Europe on behalf of NHS England.

The National Cancer Patient Experience Survey includes very few questions specific to radiotherapy and is therefore limited in supporting opportunities for radiotherapy centres to improve services and experiences for their patients. The purpose of a National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey was to obtain specific feedback from patients about their experiences of radiotherapy and offer an opportunity to benchmark services and drive local quality improvements.

This was an anonymous survey and therefore, the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) did not apply.

National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey results: Summary of national averages

Q2. When you gave your consent, to what extent did you understand:		No. of responses	I don't know	Not at all	To some extent	Completely	
The aim of the radiotherapy		2,461	0%	0%	14%	86%	
The early/ short term side effects of radiotherapy		2,363	1%	1%	20%	77%	
The late/ long-term side effects		2,357	3%	3%	33%	61%	
Q3. Were you given the chance to ask questions before giving consent?	No. of responses	I don't know	No	Yes			
	2458	1%	0%	99%			
Q4. If you did ask questions, were you happy your questions were answered?	No. of responses	I don't know	I did not ask questions	No	Yes		
	2470	1%	7%	1%	91%		
Q5. Were you happy to answer all of the questions that you were asked during	No. of responses	I don't know	No	Yes			

the discussion about consent?																
	2466	1%	0%	99%												
Q6. How happy were you with the information about radiotherapy you were given or sent before your first radiotherapy planning or CT appointment?	No. of responses	I wasn't given or sent any information	Unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very happy										
	2472	1%	0%	5%	28%	66%										
Q7. If you required information in a different format, was this provided? For example, in a different language, large print, electronic, braille, or easy read?	No. of responses	I don't know	This does not apply to me	No	Yes											
	2449	1%	87%	3%	9%											
Q8. Were you told about the local cancer information and support services at the hospital (sometimes call the Cancer Information Centre)?	No. of responses	I don't know	No	Yes												
	2462	9%	13%	78%												
Q9. How happy were you with the information about radiotherapy available on the cancer centre or hospital website?	No. of responses	I chose not to access	I did not have access to the internet	Very Unhappy	Unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very happy								
	2459	30%	5%	1%	0%	7%	21%	36%								
Q10. What was the reason you did not visit the cancer centre or hospital website?	No. of responses	I had all the information I needed	I didn't know there was information about RT on the website	I accessed information on cancer charity websites	I was unable to find the cancer centre/hospital website	Other										
	2047	77%	13%	8%	1%	1%										
Q11. Were you made aware of all of the transport options available to you before you came for your radiotherapy?	No. of responses	I can't remember	No	Yes												
	2441	6%	23%	71%												
Q12. How did you usually get to the hospital?	No. of responses	Patient transport service	Motor vehicle	Public transport	Other											
	2263	11%	78%	11%	0%											

Q13. How easy was it to find your way:	No. of responses	Not applicable	Very Difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy	I don't know/ I can't remember		
To the RT department	2469	0%	0%	2%	22%	76%	0%		
Around the RT department	2257	1%	1%	1%	24%	73%	0%		
To other departments within the hospital as part of the planning and preparation for your RT treatment	2255	13%	0%	2%	28%	56%	1%		
Q14. How would you rate the following in the department:	No. of responses	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Very good	Excellent			
The waiting room?	2465	0%	0%	6%	35%	58%			
Access to drinking water?	2417	0%	1%	5%	24%	70%			
Access to other refreshments and catering?	2352	2%	4%	16%	33%	44%			
Toilet facilities?	2435	2%	4%	16%	33%	44%			
Changing facilities?	2312	0%	1%	8%	34%	57%			
The treatment planning room (e.g. CT scanning, mould room)	2407	0%	0%	2%	26%	71%			
The treatment room?	2437	0%	0%	2%	21%	77%			
The department as a whole?	2438	0%	0%	1%	21%	78%			
Q15. Did the changing facilities allow you to maintain your dignity?	No. of responses	I don't know	Never	Rarely	Mostly	Always			
	2335	6%	1%	0%	9%	84%			
Q16. How happy were you with the information given about how to prepare for your RT planning/CT appt?	No. of responses	I was not given any information	Very unhappy	Unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very happy		
	2461	1%	0%	0%	4%	23%	71%		
Q17. How happy were you with the explanation given about what to expect during your RT treatment appts?	No. of responses	Not given an explanation	Very unhappy	Unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very happy		
	2466	1%	0%	0%	3%	24%	71%		
Q18. Were you told that you could communicate with the	No. of responses	I don't know	No	Yes					

radiographers outside the room whilst your RT was being delivered?								
	2460	7%	11%	82%				
Q19. If you had any questions about your RT, were you able to discuss these with the radiographer?	No. of responses	No	Yes					
	2447	1%	99%					
Q20. Was the information given to you by the radiographer in the treatment room the same as you had been told previously?	No. of responses	I don't know	No	Yes				
	2460	4%	1%	95%				
Q21. Were most of your radiotherapy appointments within core hours between 9am and 6pm, Monday to Friday?	No. of responses	No	Yes					
	2458	4%	96%					
Q22. How happy were you with the appointment times that you were offered?	No. of responses	Very Unhappy	Unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very happy		
	2465	1%	2%	7%	31%	59%		
Q23. Did your treatment start within 30 minutes of your appointment times?	No. of responses	Never	Rarely	Yes, sometimes	Yes, always			
	2463	1%	3%	35%	61%			
Q24. Were you informed of any delays to your radiotherapy appointment?	No. of responses	Never	Rarely	Yes, sometimes	Yes, always	There were no delays		
	2463	5%	3%	18%	51%	23%		
Q25. Would you have been willing to attend for your RT appointments on the following days or times? (select all that apply)	Weekdays between 7am to 9am	Weekdays between 6pm to 9pm	Saturday between 7am to 9am	Saturday between 9am to 1pm	Saturday between 1pm to 6pm	Saturday between 6pm - 9pm		
	44%	35%	30%	48%	43%	28%		
Q25 Cont. Would you have been willing to attend for your RT appointments on the following days or times? (select all that apply)	Sunday between 7am to 9am	Sunday between 9am to 1pm	Sunday between 1pm to 6pm	Sunday between 6pm - 9pm	I would prefer Monday to Friday, 9am - 6pm			
	28%	43%	60%	27%	52%			
Q26. During your treatment did you have a chance to discuss your treatment side-effects with a health professional? This could have been	No. of responses	No	Yes					

in a review clinic or a telephone appointment.										
	2446	9%	91%							
Q27. During your treatment, how happy were you with the information you were given about how to deal with any early/short-term side-effects of your treatment.	No. of responses	I didn't experience any early/short-term side-effects	I wasn't given any information about dealing with early/short-term side-effects	Very unhappy	Unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very happy		
	2461	2%	2%	0%	0%	6%	30%	58%		
Q28. Were you given a number to call to discuss any concerns about RT side-effects you may experience after your RT treatment finished?	No. of responses	I don't know	No	Yes						
	2457	10%	9%	81%						
Q29. How happy were you with the information you were given about how to deal with any radiotherapy side-effects in the weeks following your treatment?	No. of responses	I wasn't given any information about dealing with side effects in the weeks following RT	Very unhappy	Unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very happy			
	2424	4%	0%	1%	9%	33%	54%			
Q30. How happy were you with the written information you were given about your follow-up plan?	No. of responses	I wasn't given any information about my follow-up plan	Very unhappy	Unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very happy			
	2391	18%	0%	0%	9%	27%	46%			
Q31. During your RT, to what extent do you feel you were treated with dignity and respect:	No. of responses	Not at all	To some extent	Completely						
At the reception desk?	2452	0%	2%	98%						
In the department generally?	2427	0%	2%	98%						
In the treatment planning room (e.g. CT scanner, mould room)?	2424	0%	2%	98%						
In the treatment room	2420	0%	2%	98%						
On the treatment review appts	2267	1%	3%	97%						
Q32. Overall, how would you rate the quality of care you received during your radiotherapy?	No. of responses	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Very good	Excellent				
	2451	0%	0%	1%	13%	86%				

Q33 Please use this space to tell us if there is anything about your experience of radiotherapy that could be improved.	Free text responses to be provided to Providers.	

Feedback Survey Results

National RT Patient Experience Survey Feedback

Responses

01 Please confirm your role. (Mandatory)

Answers **14**
100%
Skips **0**
0%

Radiotherapy Service Manager
Radiotherapy Network Manager



02 Did your centre/network take part in the National Radiotherapy Patient Experience survey in September 2023?

Answers **14**
100%
Skips **0**
0%

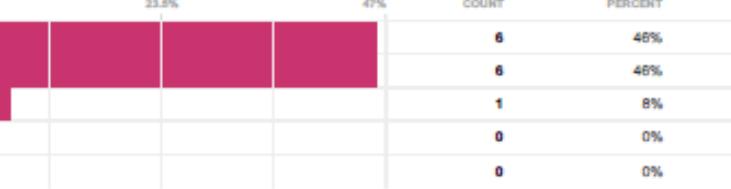
Yes
No



03 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the information provided by the project team during planning and preparation of the survey? (Mandatory)

Answers **13**
93%
Skips **1**
7%

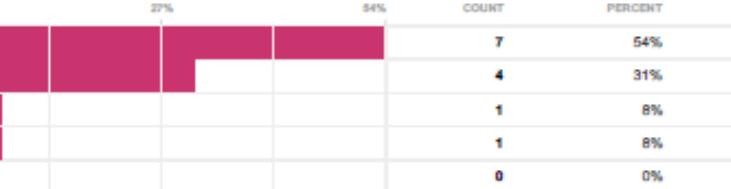
Very satisfied
Satisfied
Neutral
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied



04 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the communication from the project team before the survey was implemented?? (Mandatory)

Answers **13**
93%
Skips **1**
7%

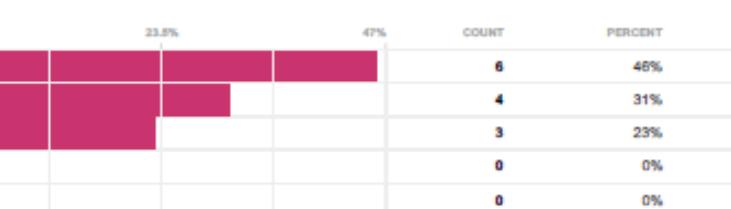
Very satisfied
Satisfied
Neutral
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied



05 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the communication and support from the project team while the survey was open? (Mandatory)

Answers **13**
93%
Skips **1**
7%

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Neutral
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied



06

What method did your centre/network choose to implement the survey? (Mandatory)

Answers
13
93%
Skips
1
7%**07**

How easy or difficult was it to implement the survey in your centre/network? (Mandatory)

Answers
13
93%
Skips
1
7%**08**

How useful was the centre-level quantitative report? (Mandatory)

Answers
13
93%
Skips
1
7%**09**

How useful was the network-level quantitative report you received? (Mandatory)

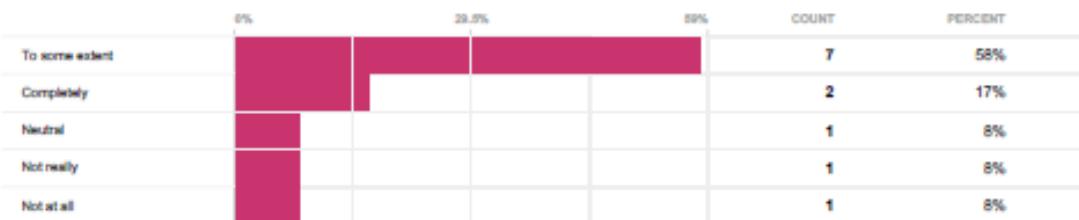
Answers
13
93%
Skips
1
7%**10**

How useful were the free-text responses you received? (Mandatory)

Answers
13
93%
Skips
1
7%

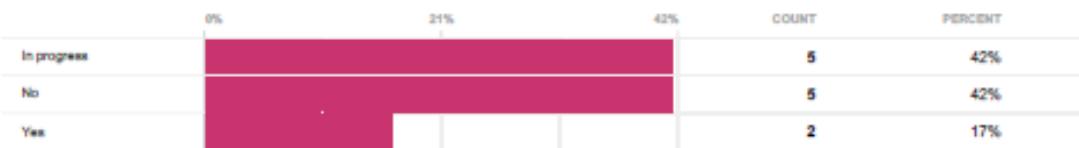
11 Did the reports help you identify areas that required improvement within your network/centre? (Mandatory)

Answers
12
88%
Skips
2
14%



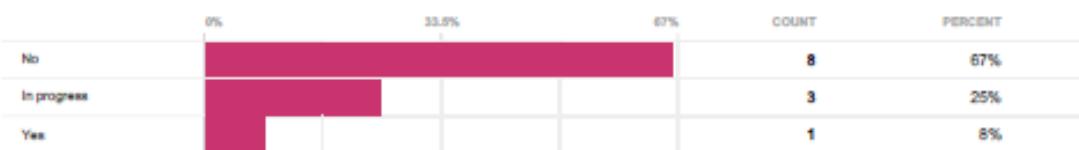
12 Have you developed an action plan to address any specific areas from your reports? (Mandatory)

Answers
12
88%
Skips
2
14%



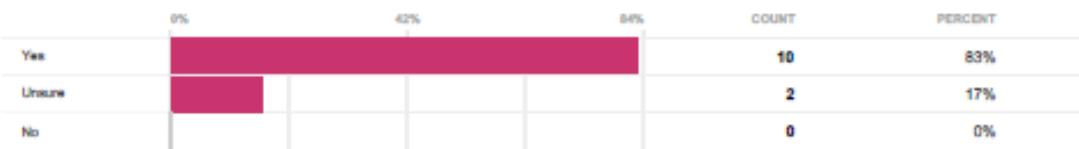
13 Have you undertaken any specific quality improvement work/projects as a result of your survey responses? (Mandatory)

Answers
12
88%
Skips
2
14%



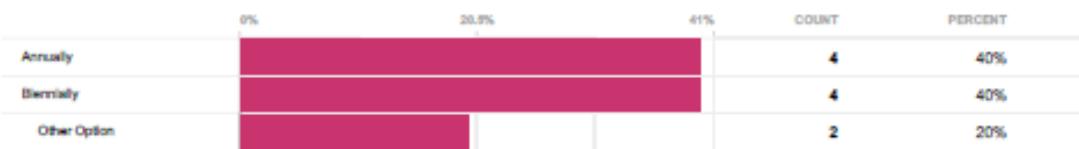
14 Would you be supportive of running the survey again in the future to measure improvements in radiotherapy patient experience? (Mandatory)

Answers
12
88%
Skips
2
14%



15 If yes, what frequency would you recommend?

Answers
10
71%
Skips
4
29%



Example Improvement Projects

West Midlands RTN/ patient Information

The data from the National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey has been used by the Quality Improvement Group in the West Midlands Radiotherapy Network to identify the need for further work on digital patient information for patients receiving radiotherapy for breast cancer. A project group has been identified and a patient insight survey will be completed in the near future to understand patient preference for accessing digital content.

North West Improvement Projects

The data from the National Radiotherapy Patient Experience Survey has been used by the North West Radiotherapy Network to identify areas to improve the quality and experience of patient care. This had been done by identifying actions plans to address patient feedback.

Improve patient Information.

It was identified that the level of patient information regarding their cancer diagnosis, treatment options, expectations and necessary preparations was insufficient. The following action plans have been developed:

- The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre (CCC) are providing virtual videos to show patients what to expect before commencing radiotherapy.
- The Lancashire Teaching Hospitals are due to begin trialling providing patient with QR codes to direct them to specific information leaflets relevant to their diagnosis.
- The Christie NHS Foundation Trust are looking to improve and update information on the Christie website.

Improve departmental/hospital signage.

It was identified that the signage available at all the Trusts across the Network was insufficient and caused confusion and frustration among patients. The following action plans have been developed:

- The CCC are in discussions with their estates teams to improve signage across the department.
- The Lancashire Teaching Hospitals have increased the signage throughout the department both a trust site and departmental specific maps to offer to patients.
- The Christie plan to increase signage to improve wayfinding at Withington, re-number treatment machines so they follow a logical order and improve signage to toilet facilities.

Improve available facilities in waiting areas.

It was identified that there was a lack of privacy for patients when changing and a lack of instruction in the changing rooms explaining what to do and where to go after changing. It was raised that essential amenities such as refreshments and a waste bin were not provided. The following action plans have been developed:

- The CCC have taken on board patient feedback to provide waste bins in changing facilities and place informative, instructive posters in the changing rooms.
- The Lancashire Teaching Hospitals feedback to pre-treatment team to ensure the blinds between the control room and scanner room are used and gowns/ screens are used were appropriate.
- The Christie is learning from their Macclesfield site which is rated as having better access to refreshments and catering compared to all other departments at The Christie.

Improve review clinics.

It was identified that some patients were not satisfied with their review clinics, and they were provided with insufficient information regarding coping with both short and long-term side-effects of their treatments. In terms of action plans it had been recognised across all the Trusts within the Network the Review Clinics need to be reviewed to ensure patients are benefiting from the service.