EYE DEPARTMENT, St. Mary’s Hospital, Newport, Isle of Wight

Informal Enter and View Visit, 3rd October 2011

Kathryn Taylor (Ward Sister), Clare Martin and Beryl Stewart Cummings (LINk Enter & View Team members)

BACKGROUND

This visit was prompted by a concern raised by a member of the public about the environment in the waiting area at the Eye Department. Specifically, an area had been highlighted where there was insufficient space for patients to pass, between chairs for waiting patients, and a corridor wall. This was felt to pose a risk to patient safety.

At the time this matter was raised, Eye Department staff had already been looking at immediate changes that could be made to improve the environment, following a patient safety walk-round by the Trust’s Chief Operating Officer, and were keen to have patient perspective on possible changes. This informal visit was therefore arranged in response.

GENERAL

St. Mary’s Eye Department is located in the old Victorian section of the hospital, and is a complex area, unfortunately of many small rooms and narrow awkward corridors for wheelchair access etc. and general health and safety. Most areas are well-utilised and serve individual, valuable purposes but throughout the Department it can be improved
in appearance and possible reorganisation of space and administrative changes in the reception area.

The staff working within the Eye Department are keen to improve patients’ experiences when attending the very busy Department which can hold up to ten clinics a day. Due to the current financial situation, it is not possible for a new department to be built, but practical improvements can be made within the existing premises. With cosmetic improvements in all areas the entire Eye Department can result in a brighter, cleaner, more pleasant and efficient area for both the staff and the patients.

Kathryn Taylor advised that all flooring is to be replaced to meet current requirements and slopes in the floor will be identified by colour changes. Currently staff must advise all patients of the sloping floors within the department. Signs are also located throughout using black print on yellow backgrounds. The department is to be redecorated conforming to Disability Discrimination Act guidance, and an Occupational Therapist will be invited to visit the clinic and offer suggestions to promote patients’ independence and minimise any risks once the old flooring has been replaced.

Several ideas and suggestions were discussed:

**FLOORING & WALL DECORATING:**

- Remove all carpet and baseboard – replace with neutral coloured non-skid vinyl flooring.
- Non-skid flooring to extend from floor up to baseboard.
- Floors colour-coded for entrances, slopes, any change in floor depth, direction etc.
- All walls painted in neutral colours.
- Every department identified.
DOORS and WOOD TRIM

- Doors (other than mandatory colour coding) light and bright colours.
- Every door identified with name plaques and department.
- Wood trim – bright, light colours

MAIN RECEPTION WAITING AREA

- Replace the existing artwork with cleaner brighter images. Background music etc.
- Informational screens for eye conditions and relevant treatments and campaigns.
- Informative colourful vinyl/plastic posters of eye conditions and procedures on walls.
- Blind Society aids/equipment samples available. Information help e.g. LlNK leaflets
- Remove all toys from main Reception.

DOCTORS WAITING AREA & ACCESS

The layout of the Department can cause some access issues. The corridors are quite narrow and chairs congest some areas where patients waiting to see relevant professionals. Wheelchairs are kept within the Department for when needed.

- Remove furniture and shelving, hand rails and consider automatic doors
- Remove and/or relocate some chairs along narrow passage in doctors’ waiting area.
- Music, informational leaflets
**CHILDREN**

There is an additional separate waiting/play area for children but perhaps this could be moved to a more suitable location away from the quieter location of Doctors’ offices and the adult Reception.

- Toys from main reception and back room all in one place.
- TV/music/DVD for children
- Investigate separate waiting area for children

**MAIN EYE-TESTING AREA**

- Better use of space if alternative eye test area can be located.
- Could this be the new Children’s waiting area….toys etc?

**RECEPTION/CHECK IN**

The Reception area is not always staffed, but patients queue before being manned causing congestion at the Department’s entrance.

Suggestions for the reception area:

- Install a ticket system similar to the Pathology Department so patient can sit until the receptionist calls patients individually to check them in
- Children might need separate check-in.

**EYE APPOINTMENTS**

The Department is considering introducing a text service to mobile phones, also an e-mail service was suggested in addition to volunteers phoning to remind patients of their appointments.

- Future and follow-up appointments are posted to patients and are often inconvenient, or possibly ignored, resulting in cancellations, No-shows and needless phone calls.
- Future appointments previously were made by the receptionist on patient checking out. Perhaps if check-in procedure is improved, time and convenience might allow for this to be reinstated.

Kathryn Taylor will raise the issues discussed and invite further suggestions at the next monthly staff meeting.