

Community Heart Failure Specialist Nurse Service

Hertfordshire Community Trust - Our core values
Care - We put patients at the heart of everything we do
Respect - We treat people with dignity and respect
Quality - We strive for excellence and effectiveness at all times
Confidence - We do what we say we will do
Improve - We will improve through continuous learning and innovation



For further information please contact 01442 454663

What is the approach?

The Community Heart Failure Specialist Nurse Service is a team of expert cardiac nurses, supported by the British Heart Foundation, providing management, treatment and support for patients, their families and carers living with heart failure in the community. This is achieved through provision of evidenced based therapies, liaison with primary and secondary care colleagues, referral to other services and following NICE guidelines for the management of chronic heart failure (CG108 2010).

The nurses support patients at all stages of their disease pathway to ensure optimisation of all treatments available, for example, assessing the suitability for referral to cardiac rehabilitation in order to maximise the patients functional capacity or identifying if further therapies such as implantable devices are required, liaising with and referring to Cardiology colleagues where appropriate. In the later stages of the disease, the nurse will identify, instigate and coordinate supportive palliative and end of life care through advanced care planning and by involving and working with wider health and social care teams including the local hospice.

Each patient has an identified nurse to manage them. This helps to build rapport and trust and provides continuity of care throughout their treatment. Once the patients symptoms have stabilised and they are on the optimum therapies, the patient is discharged but is able to contact the nurse at anytime if they start to deteriorate.

The team also provides support and education to community, primary and secondary care teams.

What are the aims?

The aims of the service are to provide patients, families and carers with tailored education, advice and support and to teach them to become actively involved in managing and monitoring their condition. The nurse will also aim to optimise medical therapies in order to improve quality of life and reduce the number of heart failure related readmissions to hospital.

What are the benefits?

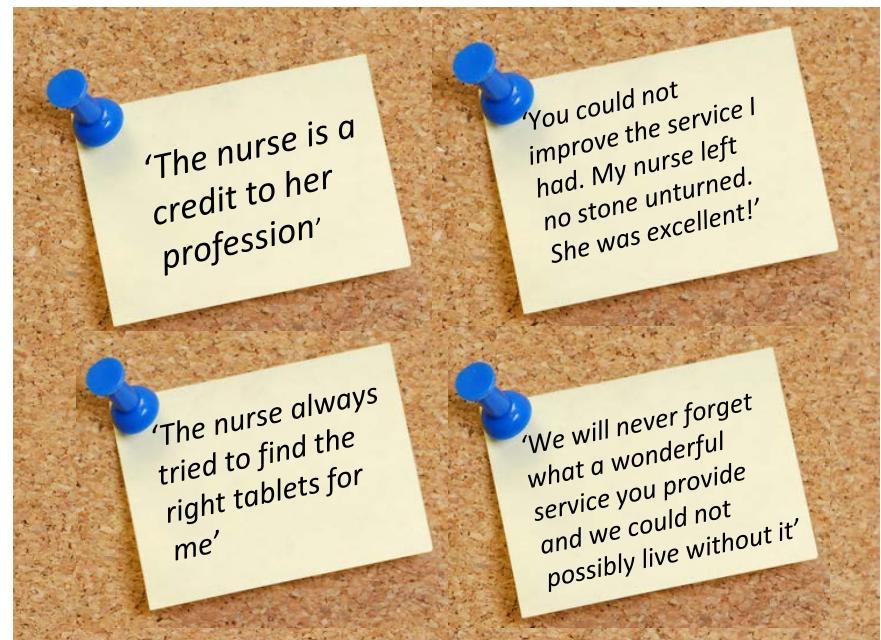
The service supports the early identification of signs and symptoms of deterioration so they can be treated and admission to hospital avoided. Through optimising medical therapy the patients ability to perform daily activities and consequently their quality of life improves. If the patients symptoms are unstable the nurse will support the patient through this by altering therapy and involving other health care professionals where necessary, patients often feedback how they feel much better for having heart failure nurse input.

Why specialist nurses?

Studies show that intervention by a specialist nurse improves quality of life and reduces hospital admissions. Heart failure specialist nurses have an in depth understanding of the pathophysiology of the disease and its management. Their specialist knowledge and advanced nursing skills enable prevention and management of symptoms and prompt intervention to prevent deterioration. By having dedicated specialists, patients are proactively managed in order to prevent crisis and a consequent admission.

What are staff and users experiences?

“We were very pleased to have someone who gave us the time to carry out a thorough assessment of my husband’s condition. It was very reassuring.”



What are the costs?

The service consists of six Band 7 nurses (five WTE).

What are the impacts and outcomes?

Medications and therapies recommended for patients with left ventricular systolic dysfunction have been shown to have a beneficial effect on length and quality of life.

During 2014, 512 admissions were avoided.

Patient satisfaction indicates:

- 97% of patients had confidence and trust in the staff treating them.
- 90% of patients felt the care helped them cope with their illness

