

My Health Story

Told to Reach - May 2013



About This Report



At a recent meeting, one Reach Expert said they wanted to share their story about going into hospital.



This Reach Expert:

- has a learning disability
- is in her 40s
- lives independently with her husband.



This Reach Expert and her husband sat down with a Reach project worker to talk through her story.



Her story includes some things that went well, some things that did not go well and she gave some thoughts and ideas on what could have made things better.

What Happened



“It was about half three in the morning, on a Tuesday near the end of September 2012.”



“I was walking out the living room toward the bathroom and I went off balance and a bit lightheaded and dizzy. I fell and banged my head on the side of the door frame. I wasn't knocked out.”



“My husband called the paramedics out and when they came in they checked my sugar levels (I've got Diabetes Type 2) and my blood pressure. They did an ECG as well. My sugar levels were high.”



“I went into the hospital about 4:00am to get checked out. They checked me in and I went see the Triage nurse.”

What Happened



“We saw a doctor about 6:00am. They did blood tests. I had X-Rays because I told him my head was hurting. They put me on a ward because they said they thought I’d had a stroke. My heart had been fluttering.”



“On the Wednesday night a nurse tried give me a blood test but she couldn’t find the vein and she kept prodding me with a needle and I was covered in bruises. She just did it. She didn’t talk to me or anything apart from say I’d feel a sharp scratch. She didn’t tell me what was happening. That made me feel angry and upset.”



“I asked see a doctor and told him what had happened. He wasn’t happy how she’d treated me so said he’d have a word. A different nurse came back to me and she was talking to me, telling me what she was doing and she was gentle, not heavy-handed.”

What Happened



"I came out on the afternoon on the Thursday. They did another ECG and X-Ray on the Thursday before I went home. When I had the ECG and the X-Ray they said I was alright to go home."



"When they let me out they said they'd send a letter to my GP. He had a letter telling him what had happened, that I'd had a mild stroke."



"My social worker got me some support and advice about healthy eating."



"I had to go back for an MRI scan. It was scary going in the drum, it was like going in a big washing machine. The staff were good, they were talking me through it."

My Medication



“They gave me paracetamol but every time I took it the pain would come back. Its not very strong. They put me on tablets for my heart and my cholesterol and they gave me Aspirin to thin my blood. They told me how to take ‘em and when and they explained it all. They sent a letter to my GP to tell him what they’d put me on. The GP sent a note to the pharmacy, let them know what happened.”



“One of the tablets they put me on, the side effects are being dizzy and falling. I wasn’t happy because I was worried about falling again. It’s months later now and I still get dizzy spells. I went into hospital again when my husband got the paramedic out because I felt lightheaded and my balance was going. He said my sugar levels were too low but they sent me home because they said there’s nothing wrong with me.”

My Husband's Thoughts



Her husband shared his thoughts with Reach. He also has a learning disability.



"They never let me know what was happening. When she had the MRI and they moved her from ward to another one, they didn't tell me what was going on."



"I'm worried about her falling again and making sure I'm there all the time if she's ill. I'm her husband and her carer and I've got sort myself out as well."



"While all this was going on, the support we get (from adult social care) was all dropping off and it finished at the end of March. She hasn't had anywhere near enough support. Should have been more all the way through."

My Thoughts



“ I didn't like how that nurse was. I saw her with another lady and she was elderly. I didn't like the way she was treating her. She was prodding at her the same way because she couldn't find a vein.”



“The nurses didn't know enough about learning disability to help me. They need get better, get some nurses in who know about people with learning disabilities.”



“There weren't enough staff on the ward to help take me the toilet so I had to go on my own and I was feeling lightheaded.”

What I Want to Happen



“What they should do is sit and talk to you when you have things done. They don't all just sit and talk to you. Some of 'em ignore you like you're invisible.”



“If they don't explain what's happening, like that nurse didn't, what's going through your mind? They need give you an idea of what they're doing and why they're doing it so you don't worry.”



This Reach Expert wanted to share their story with the University Hospital of North Staffs (UHNS).



Reach agreed to share this story with the hospital and with other Reach members.

Contacting Reach



To find out more about this report, please contact Reach Project Workers Andrew Garvey or Mark Evans.



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Reach is part of Asist, Advocacy Services in Staffordshire.



Thanks to Photosymbols for some of the images used in this report.