

# NHS Ayrshire & Arran



<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Monday 3 February 2025</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Patient Experience: Ruth's story</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Vicki Campbell, Director of Acute Services</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Laura Harvey, QI Lead, Patient Experience</b>

## 1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

## 2. Report summary

### 2.1 Situation

This story captures the experience of Ruth. It outlines both negative and positive aspects of her patient experience whilst under the care of Gynaecology Services. In particular, the anxiety caused when offered a late notice outpatient appointment for a gynaecological procedure. Her anxiety resulted from a lack of clinical information given prior to the appointment.

Ruth has chosen to share her story in digital story format, with her own words read by a member of the Patient Experience Team.

### 2.2 Background

Ruth is a 58 year old lady who initially contacted the Patient Experience Team to express her gratitude to the Gynaecology staff who had supported her during a recent appointment.

Through further communication with the Patient Experience Facilitator, Ruth chose to share some sensitive and personal information which emotionally affects her,

particularly surrounding appointments or examinations of a more intimate nature or where there is a possibility of male staff being present.

## **2.3 Assessment**

Ruth attended University Hospital Crosshouse for a planned ultrasound examination. Shortly after this examination, Ruth unexpectedly received a call from the Gynaecology Department, to offer her a further appointment. During this phone call, Ruth requested further information in relation to this follow-up appointment/procedure but was informed by the call handler that they were “not medically trained” to answer her questions and communication ended.

As this was a short notice appointment, there was insufficient time to send Ruth a formal appointment letter and/or patient information leaflet. As a result of this, Ruth chose to do some of her own research. Ruth’s self-research contributed to feelings of uncertainty, worry and anxiety.

On arrival at her appointment, Ruth felt that staff were fantastic in every discipline and were able to recognise that she was in a state of anxiousness and immediately offered reassurance and support for which she was so grateful.

The additional information provided by Ruth has highlighted some areas for improvement. Ruth feels that patients should be provided with any relevant information pertinent to an appointment or procedure, and where written information has not been provided, there should be the opportunity to speak with a clinician who can answer any queries. This will allow patients to make an informed choice on whether to accept or decline a short notice or cancellation appointment.

Ruth’s feedback is being shared widely and ideas for improvement are being gathered from the team involved to ensure future patients receive enough information when informed of appointments to prevent them from worrying needlessly. Ideas being explored include directing patients to online information about their procedures or preparing scripts for non-clinical staff to use when contacting patients.

### **2.3.1 Quality/patient care**

This story highlights the positive impact that true, person-centred care can have on a patient’s overall experience. However, in contrast it also demonstrates the negative impact that occurs when patients are not provided with adequate verbal or written information whilst being offered a short-notice or cancellation appointment.

In Ruth’s case, a lack of clinical and/or procedural information resulted in additional worry and anxiety.

In addition, where an intimate examination is planned, where possible patients should be informed of the gender of the staff member(s) present or performing the examination.

The story also highlights the importance of patient feedback and how it can be used to share lived patient experience, and use it for learning and improvement.

### **2.3.2 Workforce**

This story highlights the positive impact that a true, person-centred care approach can have when staff support a patient’s physical and emotional needs.

However, it also highlights the negative impact when we do not provide patients with relevant clinical information, at the correct time, prior to a procedure.

In order to provide person-centred care and support shared decision making, staff should ensure that patients are provided with all relevant information when offering a short notice or cancellation appointment.

### **2.3.3 Financial**

No financial impact

### **2.3.4 Risk assessment/management**

No identified risk

### **2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities**

An impact assessment is not required as the individual sharing the story has given consent and any impact on others will be individual

### **2.3.6 Other impact**

- **Best value**

Demonstrates the Importance of providing patients with verbal/written information and staff interactions with patients in helping to ensure the best possible patient experience

- **Safe, Caring & Respectful**

Ruth's story fully complies with our corporate objectives and highlights the importance of applying them to every patient throughout their care journey

### **2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation**

This patient story will be shared across all Services to highlight the impact on patient care.

### **2.3.8 Route to the meeting**

This story has not been heard at any other meetings but has been shared with the service involved. They are currently exploring positive solutions to improve information sharing prior to late notice appointments.

## **2.4 Recommendation**

For discussion. Members are asked to watch this story, and to note the importance of using patient feedback to improve and develop services.