

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
Ward 4 Assessment Ward for Older People

Please see below an explanation from Caroline Donovan, Chief Executive of North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust on the plans for Ward 4 and the wider Older People's and Neuropsychiatry services at Harplands Hospital

"Firstly, could I thank the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Members for their interest in our service. I hope that the following addresses the questions the Member has raised and provides some reassurance on the plans for Ward 4 and the wider Older People's and Neuropsychiatry services at Harplands Hospital.

As you will recall, on Wednesday 19 November 2014, Andy Rogers (Director of Operations), Kath Clark (Service Line Manager for Neuro and Old Age Psychiatry) and Annie Roberts (Head of Communications), presented our plans for changes to Neuro and Old Age Psychiatry inpatient services to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.

The plans set out how, due to the success of the Older People's Outreach Team, there was a surplus of beds across our four NOAP wards; namely Ward 4 (Older People's Assessment beds), Ward 5 (Neuropsychiatry service beds), Ward 6 (Older People's Complex needs beds) and Ward 7 (Older People's specialist care beds).

The presentation delivered to the OSC set out our plans to review the bed configuration across three wards rather than four and use the beds on Ward 4 for a service currently not offered by the Trust in North Staffordshire. Ward 5 would continue to deliver Neuropsychiatry services; Ward 6 would deliver Complex Needs care for Older People and Ward 7 would continue to deliver Old Age Psychiatry services.

We apologise if there was some confusion regarding the future use of Ward 4. Neuropsychiatry will continue to be delivered from Ward 5 (not Ward 4). The two proposed uses for the ward which we set out in the presentation are:

- Secure rehab ward, which would allow for the repatriation of patients from 'out of area'
- A shared care ward, providing additional capacity across the health economy for patients with both physical and mental health needs.

Ward 4 closed at the beginning of December with the intention of developing a business case with commissioners for one of the two possible new uses for the ward.

At the beginning of January, it became clear that there were severe pressures on the local health economy, in particular regarding UHNM and A&E waits/admission to beds. As a result, UHNM declared Major Incident status on Monday 5 January.

As part of our responsibility to support patients across the health economy, NSCHT took steps to open Ward 4 to provide additional bed capacity across North Staffordshire. The Ward opened on Friday 9 January, and is anticipated to remain open to support discharge of patients from UHNM until March 2015.

Staff from UHNM have been exceptionally supportive – we have support from a Medical Geriatrician, a nurse practitioner and 2 staff nurses Monday to Friday, as well as support from Discharge Coordinators and access to equipment from UHNM.

The patients admitted from the Royal Stoke to Ward 4 are physically very frail with organic mental health problems (predominantly dementia). They require support with walking and assistance with hydration and nutritional intake. The Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy teams at the Harplands visit the Ward daily to support with movement advice and activities.

One of the main differences between Ward 4 and UHNM wards is that the patients are not nursed in bed during the day. Ward 4 staff ensure that patients are out of bed and are dressed in their own clothes. The patients all have their own rooms and there is plenty of space to enable therapies to take place and allow patients to have time with relatives and friends. They have access to quiet areas, to televisions and radios and they go through to the dining area to have meals.

The ward is quiet and feels open and welcoming and this has helped patients and relatives to feel comfortable and supported. The patients always have staff with them and they are clearly relaxed. The positive change in patients' physical and mental health has been noted by staff, visiting staff from the Royal Stoke and relatives

Feedback from relatives has included:

"Thank you so much for caring for my husband, he looks the best I have seen him in months, he looks happy and settled."

"I am very pleased with my husband's care. He's speaking more now than in the last 6 weeks, he is like a different person."

Ward 4, therefore, at the moment is delivering the 'shared care' service – providing both physical and mental health care in partnership with the University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust. We will review the ongoing use and future use of the Ward with commissioners, to ensure the needs of the local population are met and the bed resource is used in a way which delivers best value and outcomes for those patients."

Regards

Caroline

Caroline Donovan
Chief Executive