

13 November 2018

## **HOSC update on staffing issues within our Older People's Mental Health Services**

I wrote to you back in October 2018 to make you aware of some challenges we have been experiencing in maintaining our staffing levels across our Older People's Mental Health services. We took the difficult decision to suspend admissions to Poppy Ward, based at Gosport War Memorial Hospital (GWMH) and Beaulieu Ward based at The Western, Southampton to ensure we maintained a safe level of care to our patients. We have now reviewed this and want to provide you with an update.

### **Poppy Ward, GWMH**

I am pleased to say that after carrying out some focussed work on our rosters and ensuring shifts are requested in a more timely way for NHSP and agency we have managed to establish consistent and improved staffing levels on Poppy Ward. As a result of this piece of work we have now reopened the ward to admissions.

### **Beaulieu Ward, Western Community Hospital**

Despite considerable efforts, we have been unable to recruit the registered nurses needed to ensure Beaulieu Ward is a safe place for our patients and staff. We are currently relying on a high number of bank and agency staff which is not sustainable.

As a result we have taken the difficult decision to temporarily close Beaulieu Ward, for up to six months (depending on our ability to recruit registered nurses). Patient safety and the health and wellbeing of our staff are always our priority and we feel there is no alternative option at this current time.

### **Staff on Beaulieu Ward**

We have spoken to staff this morning to explain why we are closing the ward and to discuss with them the next steps to support them and the patients.. We hope to be able to use their skills across our other OPMH wards and they will be supported to find their best alternative place of work. They will also be offered the opportunity to undertake additional training and development and to help us reopen the ward as quickly as possible.

### **Patients on Beaulieu Ward**

We will be talking to the seven patients and their families/carers later today to discuss the most appropriate options for meeting the patients' future care, which may include moving to a bed on an alternative ward, a care home placement or being cared for in the community in their own homes. We are working to safely discharge all patients by Friday 16 November. Patients are being reviewed to ensure that care plans and risk assessments are up to date and meet the needs of the patient.

### **The future**

The decision to temporarily close Beaulieu Ward will provide us with the opportunity focus on alternative options for recruiting into the service. We are doing all we can to find a solution to our recruitment issues and a further recruitment plan for OPMH services is currently being devised.

We met with the Hampshire and Southampton Commissioners at the end of last week to discuss the proposal to temporarily close the ward but also the need to take this time to review our services to patients with Dementia and work with them to redesign services that are appropriate for the future across Southampton and Hampshire. Our plan is to reopen Beaulieu Ward as soon as we have the Registered Nurses in post to safely staff the ward.

We will be reviewing this decision on a monthly basis and will keep you fully informed of developments.

## **OUR VALUES**



**Patients &  
people first**



**Partnership**



**Respect**

Please find below an overview of the actions being taken. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Nicky Macdonald, Associate Director for Learning Disability and Older Persons Mental Health Services by e-mail [Nicky.MacDonald@SouthernHealth.nhs.uk](mailto:Nicky.MacDonald@SouthernHealth.nhs.uk) or by telephone on 023 80874681 or Sarah Constantine, Associate Medical Director, by e-mail [Sarah.Constantine@SouthernHealth.nhs.uk](mailto:Sarah.Constantine@SouthernHealth.nhs.uk) or by telephone 02380 874319.

Yours sincerely

Paula Hull  
Director of Allied Health Professionals & Nursing

| Actions being taken to ensure safe services across our Older People with Mental Health Services   |  |
|---|--|
| Patients  | Staff  |
| <p>All staff across all seven of our OPMH wards are currently looking at managing care plans and are working closely with adult services at HCC and the CCG to identify which patients can be safely discharged.</p> <p>Options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate care homes</li> <li>- Moving forward on Delayed transfers of care (DTC)</li> <li>- Discharge to community team</li> <li>- Possible Out of Area beds.</li> </ul> <p>We are working with patients and their families to keep people safe and expedite long term discharge plans with partners.</p> <p>Our Trust's Patient Experience Lead is enabling families to feedback their experience and our freedom of speak up guardian within the Trust has attended to provide opportunity for staff feedback.</p> | <p>Daily staffing calls are being held to help maintain safe staffing levels on the wards – these address staffing levels shift by shift and day by day.</p> <p>We are working with our Trust's Safer Staffing Lead to help maintain safe staffing levels and a good skill mix.</p> <p>The senior team have cleared diaries to ensure that they can focus on staffing issues and are visible on both the wards on a daily basis to support staff on the wards.</p> |
| <p>Our OPMH Bed Manager for the Trust is attending extraordinary meetings with HCC adult services and South East Clinical Commissioning Groups to try and see how they can provide additional support.</p>  | <p>A new matron and Ward Manager have started with Beaulieu Ward over the last few weeks. They will be leading the review and the recruitment plan and will be looking at staff training and development.</p>  |
| <p>There are currently 12 delayed transfers of care (DTC) patients across the three organic wards two on Beaulieu, six on Poppy and four on Elmwood and the Trust continues to work with commissioners and adult services to address these difficult to place patients.</p> <p>We are maintaining a steady flow of patients with organic needs through Elmwood at Parklands (Our other Organic ward) – this means that we can admit any new OPMH patients with organic needs to Elmwood and Poppy if appropriate as opposed to Beaulieu Ward.</p>   | <p>We are also working with system partners to ensure a joined up approach to resolve staffing challenges and ensure patients are able to receive the most appropriate care in the right setting as swiftly as possible, throughout this period.</p>   |
| <p>We are liaising with the psychiatric liaison services in the acute hospitals to ensure that only patients appropriate to be nursed on these wards, are transferred.</p>  | <p>The organisational development team are also working with the service to organise sessions with the staff to support the changes required.</p>  |
| <p>A new model of Dementia care is currently being explored with Commissioners and the Trust have identified a number of key clinicians and managers to lead on this work.</p>  |  |