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Media and Communications Team

Briefing note:

Estates improvement works at Gosport War Memorial Hospital – Poppy Ward and Rose Ward

Introduction

From as early as 2001 the NHS has been trying to address and update mental health facilities – many of which still provide accommodation in out dated, dormitory style ward. In 2018 an independent review of the Mental Health Act added further weight to the need to update environments. In its final report, the review made a number of recommendations to support this, which included the following core points

- physical environment of wards needs to be improved, through co-design and co-production with people of relevant lived experience, to maximise homeliness and therapeutic benefit and minimise institutionalisation
- The backlog of maintenance and repairs needs to be addressed so that mental health facilities are brought up to standard.
- The government and the NHS should commit in the forthcoming Spending Review to a major multi-year capital investment programme to modernise the NHS mental health estate.
- All existing dormitory accommodation should be updated without delay to allow patients the privacy of their own room.

You can read the full recommendations here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modernising-the-mental-health-act-final-report-from-the-independent-review>

During our latest CQC report the environments on Poppy and Rose wards were also highlighted as areas that needed improving. This was linked directly to the points above and the fact the wards were operating in a dormitory style and not conforming with current guidance.

Following a successful bid for funding, we are undertaking significant improvement works at Gosport War Memorial Hospital (starting 7 October 2020) to our Poppy and Rose wards. This funding is part of the £400million announced by Matt Hancock on 10 October (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-400-million-pledged-to-remove-dormitories-from-mental-health-facilities>)

These wards support those with organic (Poppy Ward) mental health needs and functional mental health needs (Rose Ward). The updates will ensure the wards meet the aims and recommendations set out above, eradicating the current dormitory style settings and addressing a key action from the CQC as well as ensuring the best care and therapeutic environment is provided to our patients.

OUR VALUES



Overview of work

As outlined above, the current layout of the wards has been highlighted as an area of improvement by our regulator, the CQC, and does not meet best practice.

Poppy and Rose wards are currently both arranged in a dormitory style with 16 beds on each ward. The work undertaken will remove the dormitory style format and replace it with individual ensuite rooms. This will afford patients great privacy and provide a more therapeutic environment. It will also mean the wards meet the longstanding aim of the NHS to eliminate dormitory style wards in mental health settings.

The work is expected to take 26 weeks in total with the work running consecutively. Poppy Ward, which cares for those with organic mental health needs (e.g dementia) will go first. The work to change the ward is estimate to take 16 weeks. During this time patients currently on the ward will be supported in the Trust's other organic mental health wards, such as Beaulieu Ward in Southampton. Following the completion of Poppy Ward, patients will return and work will begin immediately on Rose Ward. Rose Ward supports those with functional mental health needs (e.g depression). The timescale for this work is expected to be around 10 weeks. Again, patients will be supported in our other wards during this time, or if possible, they will be supported in the community.

We recognise that this work will have an impact on patients, their families and carers. From 21 September we ceased admission in to these wards in anticipation of the work. At the Beginning of October we only had 6 patients on Poppy Ward and 10 patients on Rose. This meant the number of patients affected by the disruption was minimal. Patients who needed to be temporarily placed in other wards have been moved to alternative OPMH in patient wards within the Trust. This is something we have been able to do through the constant managing of our beds, with our current bed occupancy around 64%. Pre COVID this figure was around 80%.

Due to the physical size of the space involved, the improvement work will reduce the overall number of beds from 16 to 14 on each ward. It is recognised that acuity on wards increase as community provision is strengthened, therefore this marginal bed reduction will not directly affect the required staffing but will slightly increase the nurse to patient ratio to support our capacity to support patient need. Thus enabling staff to be more responsive and develop care further in line with current best practice. Furthermore, ensuite rooms provide greater flexibility with regards to meeting the mixed needs of a patients, allowing us to be more responsive and care for more patients who might otherwise have had to go elsewhere for treatment.

We recognise the incredibly short notice for this work is less than ideal. We were told we were successful in late September and began to plan, but only received the funding this week (07 October). We have moved quickly as the previous environment was a risk. We are keen to make these improvements as soon as possible, ensuring the best care and therapeutic environment is provided to our patients.

Alongside the improvement works to the physical wards, a dedicated Intensive Support Team has been set up. This team will support more people to remain in their home, avoiding unnecessary admissions. The team will work alongside the local Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) to provide intensive, regular and emergency support for a mental health crisis that cannot be facilitated through the CMHT. They will work closely with the CMHT, GPs and extended primary care and relevant teams at QA.

This work represents a significant investment. This is by far the biggest investment in older person's mental health (OPMH) in the area and will ensure that Gosport War Memorial is providing the best care possible for people in a modern environment. The creation of the Intensive Support Team will also ensure that more people are able to be supported in their own home, alongside their loved ones, avoiding admissions unless absolutely necessary whilst also providing support to other mental health teams.

Our public and patient experience team are working closely with the teams at the Hospital to ensure full involvement of patients and carers as part of this work. This includes a dedicated session (virtual) in November to talk to carers, families and other patient stakeholders, including third sector, with the aim of sharing key parts of the transformation plans and facilitating regular engagement and involvement meetings. This will ensure the re-design has full service user engagement and is co-produced to high degree.

Further points of note

- Whilst these plans have developed and been implemented at pace we have been working closely with our commissioners who are supportive of our plans
- With the looming threat of a second wave of COVID and the ever present winter pressures we have undertaken a risk analysis to ensure this work will not have a negative impact on our response to these key issues. Whilst patients on Poppy and Rose wards are living with multiple comorbidities and frailty, the wards are not part of local system contingency plans for any second wave. In addition to this, moving to ensuite rooms also enables Infection Prevention and Control teams to better contain contagious patients, improving the safety of others on the ward.
- During the work, staff will be temporarily redeployed to other relevant wards. Moving from 16 beds to 14 beds will be reflected in future staffing numbers. Staff will be given the opportunity to remain on the wards, become part of the new Intensive Support Team or be redeployed elsewhere.

Any questions?

If you have any questions, please contact Kate Smith (Southern Health's Mental Health Head of Operations PSEH) via email: Kate.smith@southernhealth.nhs.uk

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