

Report To: Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: 11th March 2014

Report By: Jackie Charlesworth, Deputy Head of Integrated Commissioning

Subject: Consultation with service users, families and carers in respect of the proposal to close the Lowry Centre, Solent NHS Trust, and support people to access appropriate services in alternative settings

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the plans to consult with service users, families and carers who currently use the Lowry Centre on the proposal to close the unit and support people to access appropriate support in the community, or alternative day service provision if required.

2. Background

The Lowry Centre operates as a day hospital, providing up to 20 places daily, 5 days per week, for older people with functional and organic mental health problems who are registered with GP's in Portsmouth City. The Unit is part of a range of Older People's Mental Health Services commissioned from Solent NHS Trust.

Referrals to the unit have been decreasing since 2012, and there are currently 20 people using the service, People are increasingly referred to the range of community services which have been commissioned as a result of implementing the Dementia Action Plan for the City, developed in response to the National Dementia Strategy - Living Well with Dementia (2009).

The current and future direction of services is for early identification, re-ablement and support for people to live well with dementia in their communities, accessing short-term secondary care and inpatient support as necessary. People with dementia are no longer expected to live large parts of their lives within the NHS. The new services being offered include:

- The development of two Dementia Cafes, one in Southsea and one in Cosham. These provide information and support, and enable people living with dementia and carers to meet regularly and share their experiences with others in similar positions.
- The introduction of dementia advisers, whose role is to be a single identifiable point of contact with knowledge and direct access to the whole range of available local services.

- The responsibility for the provision of the Carer Information and Support programme now being managed by The Alzheimer's Society. This was formerly provided by Solent NHS Trust.
- The launch of the Dementia Network by the Alzheimer's Society in January 2014.
- The current trial of a range of reablement services such as The Dementia Voice Nurse, who can work with people with Dementia nearing the end of their lives and who have multiple and complex needs.

It is important to stress that all of the people who currently use the service will continue to have their needs met in the future, in the event that the Unit closes. This will be based on a full assessment of their needs and identification of the most appropriate community based services such as those listed above, or other services which already exist. This follows the trend seen over the past two years of more people accessing community support rather than referral to hospital-based services.

For those people who require ongoing day service provision, discussions have taken place with the Royal Albert Day Centre to ensure they have the capacity to accommodate additional clients. We have been given assurance that there is sufficient capacity.

3. Consultation Plan

The service is well regarded by services users and families alike and it is acknowledged that any plans to change the service will create anxiety and concern for everyone concerned. The impact on people affected by the proposal cannot be underestimated and we are working hard to ensure that the consultation process is handled as sensitively as possible, given the difficult issue that will be discussed, and that families, carers and service users have every opportunity to give their views and have their voice heard.

To this end it has been agreed that:

- The initial contact regarding the proposal will be via the service as relationships already exist between those staff and managers, with families and service users
- People will be offered the choice of individual meetings and discussions, (which will be on-going throughout the consultation period) as well as at least two wider meetings where people can come together as a group with service managers and commissioners to discuss issues together
- The consultation will take place over 12 weeks, but be flexible in its dealings to ensure people's needs are met
- People will be given information about access to the independent advocacy service

- 'Best Interest' assessments will be carried out as part of the assessment process and used to influence the decisions about the type of support people need in the future

The consultation timeline is outlined below:

Date/ Week commencing	Action	Progress
17/2/14	Joint CCG/Solent letter to service users and families advising them of proposal and consultation plans	completed
	Early discussions with staff around proposal	Service Manager met with staff to explain the letter being sent to users and families, and about the future process for discussions with staff once the CCG decision had been made
	Assessments of current service user's needs begins	Work started as planned
24/2/14	1 st families consultation meeting (27 th)	Meeting held at Lowry Centre 3 service users attended, supported by some staff members
	Individual service user, family/carer discussions and/or meetings as requested	One individual meeting arranged for 10/3/14
3/3/14	2 nd families consultation meeting (3 rd March)	Meeting held at Lowry Centre, 15 service users and family members attended, supported by some staff members.
	Individual service user, family/carer discussions and/or meetings as requested	No further meetings have been requested. No families or service users have requested future service-wide meetings
	Ongoing assessments of current service users including clinical risk management plans as required	This work is in progress and will be continuous throughout the process
10/3/14	Individual service user, family/carer discussions and/or meetings as requested	Family didn't turn up for the meeting, this will be rearranged
	Early discussions with families about future service provision	These meetings are in the process of being arranged.
	Write up and review feedback from service users and families, and identify any issues which need to be addressed. Send write-up to service users and families.	Draft write-up written. Being checked and reviewed (as at 11/3/14). Need to check what support is available in the community for people with functional illness
17/3/14	Individual service user, family/carer discussions and/or meetings as requested	
	Early discussions with families about future	

Date/ Week commencing	Action	Progress
	service provision	
24/3/14	Individual service user, family/carer discussions and/or meetings as requested	
	Early discussions with families about future service provision	
31/3/14	Individual service user, family/carer discussions and/or meetings as requested	
7/4/14	Individual service user, family/carer discussions and/or meetings as requested	
14/4/14	Individual service user, family/carer discussions and/or meetings as requested	
	Draft CCC report developed	
21/4/14	Individual service user, family/carer discussions and/or meetings as requested	
28/4/14	Consultation period ends	
	Final report written	
5/5/14	CCC decision meeting (7 th)	
	Letter to families with decision	
	Future plans developed	

4. Progress

Two service-wide meetings have been held and were attended by 18 service users, and family members, and similar points and issues were raised at each. All those who attended were concerned about the proposal, and there was anxiety about what the future held for people who currently use the service, and those who might need support in the future. The service is highly valued and seen by users and families alike as a safe environment where people who are vulnerable can find support and companionship, and where there are caring staff who understand them and help them maintain their recovery. In some cases staff and service users had known each other for a number of years.

There was a degree of scepticism about whether the decision had already been made to close the service and whether people's views held any weight. Assurances were given that the decision had not yet been made and this was a genuine consultation where people's views would be listened to and taken into account.

One thing which emerged during the discussion was the lack of knowledge about the community-based support for people with functional illness, such as depression or anxiety. It was acknowledged that a great deal had been done to provide community support for people with dementia, and a review of support for people with functional illness is being followed up by the project team.

People also wanted to know what support was available for carers. It was agreed to provide this information to families, and also make this available through the service.

Healthwatch have been advised that the consultation is taking place, along with the Dementia Action Group. To date we have not received any further communication from these two groups.

We are sensitive to the fact that consultation is currently being undertaken about the reprovision of the service provided at the Patey Centre. There is a chance that the families, press, public and campaigners may well link the two consultations together and this may generate a deal of adverse publicity for both the CCG and Solent NHS Trust. To this effect, the relevant Communications teams have been involved in discussions about the proposal and preparation of press statements. The PCC communications team has also been kept informed of this issue and will have copies of press statements etc as appropriate. However, at the time of writing there has been no contact from the press, public or campaigners on this issue.

Future Actions

We are currently in week 4 of the consultation process and no further service-wide meetings have been requested so far. However, there is sufficient flexibility in the consultation plan to accommodate this should further meetings be required. Staff are currently arranging individual meetings with each service user and their family and/or carers to discuss needs and how people could be supported in the future.

The outcome of the work into the identification of community services for people with functional illness will be fed into this process.

Following the end of the consultation period a report will be compiled for the Clinical Commissioning Committee of Portsmouth CCG, which will combine the original proposal with the outcomes of the consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment. This meeting will take place in May. CCC members will use this report to help them make a decision about the proposal.