

Report to: Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: 28th October 2014

Report by: Jackie Charlesworth, Deputy Head of Integrated Commissioning Unit

Subject: Outcomes for former service users following closure of the Lowry Centre, Solent NHS Trust

1. Purpose of the report

In March 2014 a paper was submitted to HOSP which detailed the consultation with service users, families and carers in respect of the proposal to close the Lowry Centre and support people to access appropriate support in alternative settings.

Officers were asked to submit a report 3 months post closure of the Lowry Centre detailing the outcomes for service users, and considering whether the solutions for former service users had been successful. This report details those outcomes.

2. Background

The Lowry Unit was a day service which provided up to 100 places per week for older people with functional and organic mental health problems. The Unit was part of a range of Older People's Mental Health services commissioned from Solent NHS Trust by NHS Portsmouth CCG. Referrals to the unit had been decreasing since 2012, until a point was reached where concerns about the viability of the service had been raised.

An independent review in 2013 concluded that, amongst other actions, the ongoing future of service provision at the Lowry Centre should be considered.

Consultation with service users, families and carers was carried out during February to April 2014 on the proposal to close the unit and provide support in alternative settings for those people who required it. There were only 9 clients who needed ongoing support for functional illness at the conclusion of the consultation period.

Common themes from the consultation were:

- Without exception people reported they had received excellent support in the Lowry Unit
- People felt better for attending, and they would miss the staff and friendships which had built up over time
- People were upset about the proposal, but understood why it was being considered
- Concerns about how people would be supported if they became unwell in the future
- Concerns that it was just a money saving exercise

On the 7th May the Clinical Commissioning Committee of Portsmouth CCG decided to support the proposal to close the unit.

The current and future direction of services is for early identification, reablement and support for people to live well with dementia or functional illness in their communities accessing short-term secondary care and inpatient support as necessary. People with dementia and functional illness are no longer expected to live large parts of their lives within the NHS.

3. Outcomes for service users

A plan for closure was developed which would address the key concerns raised during the consultation period. The 9 clients who needed ongoing support would continue their support in a private service called Cedar House, in Portsmouth funded by the NHS. The plan detailed that:

- All 9 clients would transfer as a cohort to the new provider
- Staff from the Lowry Unit supported individuals during the transfer process, and worked alongside staff in Cedar House to ensure they were familiar with the former patients and their needs
- All clients would continue to be supported by the OPMH service regarding their ongoing health needs
- Senior staff from the OPMH service would monitor progress and visit the service regularly
- Clients were provided with transport to attend the new service

4. Views of service users

There has been ongoing individual dialogue with the 9 clients following transfer to Cedar House in July to ensure that people were settling well, and senior members of the OPMH team visited the new service on Friday 24th October to specifically talk about their views on the change.

The feedback from clients was that:

- They are all very happy with the service and support they receive
- They are settled and have had no complaints
- There has been no impact to their health and wellbeing which is attributable to the change in service

These points reflect the outcomes of discussions with individuals which the OPMH service have sought since the move.

5. Conclusion

Close working between NHS Portsmouth CCG and Solent NHS Trust together with open and honest discussion with service users, families and carers has led to the successful closure of a service, and provision of community based support for this small group of people. People are happy with the support being provided, and the change has not had an adverse impact on their health and wellbeing.