

## **Out of area mental health beds & internal bed capacity**

### **Introduction**

Further to a September 2020 paper, which outlined the sustained and substantial drop in use of 'out of area' placements, we have been asked to provide an update on this for the HASC meeting in January 2021.

This update will also include a briefing on how we are increasing in-house bed capacity to reduce the Trust's reliance on other providers for mental health beds (summarising some information which was contained in an earlier October 2020 paper).

### **Background**

A key priority for Southern Health is to ensure that people who need admission to a mental health hospital are able to access this care close to home. The Trust has been working in recent years to ensure that all patients within its catchment areas who need an admission are supported in a Southern Health Hospital. This has involved a different way of managing access to beds (including more local frontline ownership of bed management) combined with rigorous daily monitoring and increased communication with patients and professionals at out-of-area sites.

When we last updated HASC, in September 2020, there was just a single patient placed out of area - compared to more than 80 patients placed out of area during an unwelcome peak in late 2019.

This excludes the beds we sub-contact at Marchwood (17 acute beds) and Thornford Park (8 female PICU beds) which is about 14 miles from Basingstoke.

### **Updated position**

Southern Health is pleased to confirm that this improved position is being maintained, keeping inappropriate out of area placements either at zero or a minimal figure (the highest the figure has been since August is three). Currently the figure (as of 22<sup>nd</sup> December) is zero.

The reason the figure has sometimes risen from zero to one, two or occasionally three out of area placements is when we require a female PICU (psychiatric intensive care unit) bed that we do not provide and our eight sub-contracted beds at Thornford are in use. As you will see from this paper, action is planned to address the lack of female PICU provision.

The only other occasion in recent months when we have required an out of area placement, it has been for appropriate and exceptional circumstances due to the patient's professional role in the NHS.

Southern Health would like to assure the HASC that our rigorous daily monitoring of out of area mental health placements continues and we are confident that we can maintain our current positive position with the required investment in NHS beds.

### **Supporting the reduction in out of area placements by investing in more beds locally**

In addition to the work we continue to do in keeping out of area placements to a minimum (benefiting patients, families and NHS finances), we also have additional plans to support people in being cared for close to home.

After careful assessment of the demand for mental health beds and our capacity to deliver, there was a strong case for additional mental health beds within our services. This will reduce our reliance on our current contracts described above with Marchwood Priory and Thornford Park. Creating extra capacity will also help to ensure the most therapeutic environment for patients and enable services to flex to meet peaks in demand.

As a result, our plans for increasing capacity are as follows:

#### **Opening a new 10-bed female PICU in 2021 at Antelope House, Southampton**

- This will be beneficial as there is currently a shortage of these beds in Hampshire.
- It will help us to deliver equity of treatment for male and female PICU patients.
- To be known as Abbey Ward, the PICU will complement other wards in Antelope House and our other acute inpatient sites.
- We have identified capital to refurbish the area to the correct standard and we continue to work with commissioners to identify the recurrent revenue needed to staff this ward.
- The challenge will be recruiting sufficient staff to run the ward so an opening will be phased to support this, likely from the summer of 2021 onwards. In support of recruitment, we have already commissioned a recruitment video to attract staff to Antelope House and are planning to host a series of recruitment opens days in the new year.
- We have already started to engage and consult with staff, patients, carers and other stakeholders to ensure their views are taken into consideration as things progress. For example:
  - Our patient involvement lead has been undertaking 'floor walks' with patients to help us fully understand the patient journey from when they first step into the unit to leaving. This has enabled us to make changes to our floorplan to ensure the patient journey is as therapeutic as it can be.
  - Our patient involvement lead has also consulted with patients from Thornford Park around the use of colours in the decoration of the new PICU.

#### **Opening a new 18-bed female acute mental health ward at Parklands Hospital, Basingstoke**

- To be located on the top floor of Parklands Hospital (currently used as an admin base, so admin teams will relocate locally to Chineham Business Park in Basingstoke).
- We are starting to engage with patients to help us shape the design of the new ward and a new staffing model for the best care possible. For example:
  - Past and present patients have been involved in plans for decoration, including around hand-painting doors, as well as decisions on how the rooms will be named, and other elements.
  - The new ward will have a 'therapeutic corner' which is a dedicated space for activities and relaxation for patients.

- Staff engagement is also well underway with a consultation about the relocation of admin teams opening on 4 December, zoom calls set up for staff to discuss the plans and a detailed intranet page containing timelines, frequently asked questions and contact details for further support.
- We have identified capital to refurbish the area to the correct standard and continue to work with commissioners to identify the recurrent revenue needed to staff this ward.
- We hope building work will be begin imminently, with the aim of opening the ward in summer 2021.
- As the new ward will be female only, Parklands' current acute ward known as Hawthorns 2 will become a male only ward.

**For further information**

For more information, please contact [communications@southernhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@southernhealth.nhs.uk).