

04 2019
Communications and Engagement Team

Briefing note:

Planned Changes to West Hampshire Learning Disability Service

Overview

For a number of years we have experienced enduring logistical problems in regard to the location of our West Hampshire Learning Disability team. This impacts on the level of care we are able to provide and so, after engagement with staff and patients, we are proposing to move services from Totton Hub (in Totton) and Hampshire House (in Eastleigh) to Tatchbury Mount (in Calmore) this May/June.

We believe this will improve the quality of care we can deliver and also staff efficiency - and we have the support of both patients and staff to do this.

Background

Southern Health staff have worked from these two offices owned by Hampshire County Council (HCC) for a number of years and have experienced IT connectivity issues throughout this time, as well as some other logistical issues linked to the premises.

This results in a number of problems:

- Inability to connect to an IT service (and complete patient notes in a timely fashion).
- IT service 'dropping out' whilst in use, resulting in a loss of data and having to re-input the information (wasting precious clinical time).
- Difficulty with printing important patient documents, letters etc.
- Compatibility issues with keyboards (and the cost to replace these) plus the need to switch keyboards when using RiO cards to access clinical notes (depending on the task required).
- Accessibility issues for staff, visitors and patients trying to access the council building at Totton Hub - resulting in service users missing appointments because they cannot park and service users feeling unsafe or anxious while crossing busy roads.
- A reduction in available space for the learning disability team across both sites - Hampshire House in particular. This reduces the space for our learning disability staff to host students, hold storage, access desks with appropriate IT on them etc.

These problems have been outstanding for several years and there have been long and protracted communications with HCC and their IT team about the problems, which have not resulted in any satisfactory or permanent solutions due to system set up and access issues. As a result, due to the increasing impact on our staff and patients, we needed to consider a more radical solution to solve the problems - a solution suggested by staff themselves.

OUR VALUES



Planned Changes

The proposal is to relocate the learning disability team members currently based at Totton Hub and Hampshire House to Tatchbury Mount. The benefits include:

- IT connectivity at Tatchbury is reliable and the system is protected and supported by Southern Health's own IT services, which are responsive and allow for easy fix solutions.
- Access to the building will be easier for staff, visitors and patients – admin staff will meet and greet service users/visitors and direct them to the waiting area, all on the ground floor.
- Parking on the Tatchbury Mount site is free and, where appropriate, spaces for Blue Badge Holders will be controlled to ensure availability.
- Having one team in one base would allow for greater team cohesion, improved team communications and more streamlined administration processes, giving clinical staff more time with patients – this is something that the whole team would welcome.
- Treatment rooms and meeting rooms are easily accessible to all.

Naturally there are some risks associated with this proposed change of base - namely the increase in staff, patient and carer travel. There is also the potential that our relationships with some of our HCC colleagues, whom staff currently work closely with, may diminish to some extent. However, these risks are mitigated by the following points:

- Since June last year, there has been an organic reduction in certain services provided at Totton Hub and Hampshire House anyway, due to new HCC teams moving into the buildings. As a result, an increasing number of home visits have been organised, due to the lack of available office space. This will continue to be carefully monitored following the move, but we believe that having access to our own treatment and clinic rooms will help clinicians provide a reliable service and we can be more proactive in ensuring access for service users.
- This is further mitigated by home visits when a patient's circumstances or their clinical presentation requires this. Indeed, the majority of our patients are seen in their own environments.
- We will provide staff with a 'change of base' allowance to cover any additional costs related to increases in their daily mileage when the move happens.
- Travel to the northern area of our team's service boundary has already been supported as we have a drop-in facility at Beech Hurst in Andover and we plan to keep this to support effective working in that area.
- HCC colleagues have moved to a 'Hub model', changing their geographical boundaries so they no longer match our health boundaries. As part of this, access to immediate social care support now goes through a single point of access rather than the local social care teams - and therefore our staff are no longer working with colleagues in the same building as was happening previously. There are arrangements in place to maintain the close working relationships and communication between health and social care which were put in place when this change occurred and remain in place.

Meeting the Trust's values

The Trust believes the proposal to relocate some of our West Hampshire Community Learning Disability Team would reflect the Trust's values.

Patients and People First

Access to Tatchbury is easier for patients and more welcoming, with experienced Learning Disability team members personally welcoming all into the building. Parking is close to the building with clearly marked areas for disabled parking. The rooms to be used are all on one floor with easy access for all visitors. The management of room bookings would be via the learning disability team exclusively, allowing for flexibility of booking and room availability.

Partnership

We will continue to work closely with our social care colleagues and senior HCC and Southern Health management have been meeting to promote ways of working.

Members of the Service User Group which currently meets at Totton Hub have been involved in planning the move to Tatchbury and many already are familiar with the site (as part of the service was based there a few years ago) and so they have welcomed the move.

Partnerships within the team will be strengthened by virtue of being based on one site, and this single base will also support more staff being able to attend team meetings and events. Being located together will strengthen team resilience during difficult periods and will further enhance team working and cooperation.

Respect

The work we have undertaken to engage key partners in this planned change of base demonstrates the respect we have for the people we serve and the team members who deliver the care. We are also mindful that to get the very best from our resources, pooling them all in one location will aid the care we give and the wellbeing of our staff.

When?

It is planned that the move will take place in late May or early June 2019.

Engagement Activity & Next Steps

Our staff have been frustrated by some of the aspects of working in HCC building and recognise this is unlikely to change. The frustrations and clinical time wasted at the current locations mean that staff have pushed for this move, in order to improve working conditions and ultimately the care they provide to patients. As a result, the workforce has been kept informed of the proposed move throughout the planning process and have been very positive regarding this.

The involvement and engagement of staff has helped us identify the specific issues with Totton Hub and Hampshire House, which have been raised via Trust reporting systems, in personal supervision sessions, via emails as well as in team meeting forums. They have had opportunity to challenge the proposed move but to date this has not been the case and we have had full and committed engagement from our staff.

Patient voices have been heard and listened to regularly through our Service User Groups, which meet every six weeks. They have also been instrumental in developing an accessible letter to be shared with all service users regarding the move.

We have also listened to individual service users who have voiced to clinicians that they have found Totton Hub difficult to access, due to poor parking and busy roads. At Hampshire House, service users have found their appointments sometimes need rebooking due to changes in room use or changes by HCC staff when prioritising meetings. Service users, carers and families find this difficult to manage as they have made special preparations for these visits and find it difficult to change without notice.

The listening and sharing of information will continue until the proposed move date. Once the move has been completed, service users, carers and families will be asked to feedback with regard to any changes which will make access even better for them. To date, service users have been supportive of the plans to move staff from Totton Hub and Hampshire House to Tatchbury Mount.

Any questions?

If you have any questions, please contact Margaret Martins, Team Manager, West Hampshire Community Learning Disability Team on 023 80 383444 or email: margaret.martins2@southernhealth.nhs.uk.

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