

Proposals for older people's mental health inpatient services at the Western Hospital

Engagement report

October 2023

1. Introduction

Southern Health provides inpatient and community mental health services for older people in Southampton. There is also a wide network of voluntary sector organisations working in the city providing considerable support for people living with dementia and their carers. Furthermore, there are specialist older people's wards at the general hospital, supported by a liaison psychiatry team, able to provide dedicated care for people with dementia who are using the hospital.

Specialist inpatient dementia wards support people who, sadly, become extremely aggressive or disinhibited, due to their dementia, such that they can no longer be safely supported in a community setting. Thankfully, the vast majority of people living with dementia will never require this type of care, and the focus of dementia services is on supporting people to live well with dementia in the community.

Southern Health is working to provide the most appropriate inpatient older people's mental health services to support the populations of Hampshire and Southampton. The Trust proposes to focus inpatient dementia services in Basingstoke and Gosport hospitals (which have been renovated to provide high quality dementia care environments), and to transform and increase the inpatient space at the Western Hospital, Southampton, to better support patients with functional mental health needs (for example depression, anxiety and psychosis) for which there is greater need within the city. Detailed analysis of demand over the last two years suggests this will not impact on the Trust's ability to provide inpatient care when patients require it, and will better meet the specific demand experienced in Southampton and Hampshire.

More details on this proposal were shared at the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel in June. At this meeting, the HOSP recommended further engagement with key groups in the city prior to a final decision being made at the Panel in October.

This paper provides an overview of the engagement activity carried out, the feedback gathered and how this has been taken into account in the context of the proposals.

2. Summary of engagement activity and feedback themes

Between July and October, the Trust carried out a range of communication and engagement activities. This included face to face and virtual meetings with carers and local dementia organisations. The Trust worked in partnership with Caraway, Communicare Southampton, and Unpaid Carers Southampton to reach carers directly. The Trust worked with partners to share information and seek views via newsletters and websites. This included a newsletter with circulation to approximately 1,400 carers in Southampton, and publication on the Healthwatch Southampton website and Southern Health's website. Information about the proposals was also shared via the Southern Health Stakeholder Update which is shared with over 1,000 stakeholders across Southampton and Hampshire. The Trust also sought views from communities surrounding

Southampton, including Romsey Dementia Action Group. A detailed description of communications and engagement activity conducted is in Appendix 1.

During engagement, there was some expression of concern over the possibility that some Southampton residents may need to travel further for care or to visit loved ones. However, in all cases, when the full range of existing community, voluntary sector, and acute hospital support, and the offer to support with transport, were described, this minimised the concern and there was no out-right opposition to the proposals, with a general understanding and acceptance of the rationale for change. The offer of transport support was positively received, but needed to be more clearly described and communicated (see Appendix 2).

A key theme which emerged was the lack of joined up information about support available to patients and carers, especially upon receipt of diagnosis. Some carers shared their own feelings of isolation and helplessness. There was much discussion about the need for more information, and for this to be available in a variety of formats and at different stages of the patient/carer journey. Improving this picture must be a focus for all agencies to continue to address.

As a counterpoint, some carers shared very positive experiences of accessing local support. This included the Dementia Action Groups and specific carer support courses which are run by Caraway.

Additional feedback points and responses provided by the Trust are shown below:

Feedback theme	Response
People generally saw the benefit of the proposals for older people with functional mental health needs in the city. Positive about the improvements that could be made to that unit.	N/A
People responded positively to the fact that dementia wards in Basingstoke and Gosport had been refurbished and represented much better care environments	N/A
People wanted to know how many people may be affected by these proposals in terms of admission / travel.	At any one time, between five and 10 Southampton residents are receiving care in the dementia inpatient unit in Southampton. This is from a total caseload in the city of around 700 people. The remaining beds in this unit are being occupied by people from other parts of Hampshire, most notably east of the county. The greater demand in the city is for the functional mental health beds.
Concerns that proposals would disproportionately impact people on lower incomes	The transport offer would ensure that people on lower incomes are not disproportionately disadvantaged.
Impact on additional transport distance/time on older people or those with mobility needs	The transport offer will help ensure that people are not disadvantaged if they have mobility needs. The support will be tailored to individual need.
Concerns that people in the South West Hampshire / New Forest area would also be impacted	The Trust has engaged groups in the Romsey/Test Valley area and sought views from Hammersley Homes in the New Forest. The Trust has also written to New Forest MP to make aware of proposals and will bring up at upcoming mental health meeting. The transport support offer will

	also be made available to people in South West Hampshire whose loved one would have been admitted to a bed in Southampton.
Need to provide flexible range of options for carers/families to remain in touch with inpatients	Alternative methods for staying in touch with patients are in place. This includes video calls via ipads, telephone calls, and extended visiting hours. Dependent on patient needs, visiting hours can be completely flexible and individualised.
Could a buddy system be implemented to ensure visitors had a good experience when they arrive at an unfamiliar hospital	Parklands Hospital in Basingstoke has a single main entrance and continuous reception service. The Trust will ensure there is clarity in directions for any carers visiting patients in Gosport. Where necessary a member of staff will be able to greet the visitor upon arrival.
More detail is needed on the offer of transport support. How would this work? Would it be temporary? Will different care teams all have the same information to ensure the offer is consistently applied?	The Trust will provide a full written description of the transport offer and ensure this is shared with all relevant care teams in the city. The transport support offer has been detailed in Appendix 2 below.
Could dementia step down beds be set up in the New Forest	Supporting people in the community and avoiding admissions needs to be a priority as this is ultimately best for patients in vast majority of cases. The Trust provides input into care homes in the New Forest and this is a good solution for people whose needs cannot be met at home but who do not require an admission to a specialist dementia ward. For people with advanced dementia it is not always the best for the patient to have repeated moves within care settings as this is disorientating and likely to lead to an increase in distress.
Perception from carers that there is very little support available to them. Need to better coordinate and share information about all the charities and organisations that are available in different areas. How can the NHS better support local organisations doing work in the community. It would be useful to have a single, updated website with all the information on.	The Trust will include links to existing Southampton and Hampshire signposting services on its website. The Trust will also ensure that all care teams are aware of the local support available to carers so that they can signpost. A further piece of work is needed, in partnership with local authorities, community groups and charities to explore what more can be done to improve access to information and signposting for carers. All carers are given a carers booklet which contains information and links to key organisation, we also have a carers page on our website. Carers leads in our services also signpost carers to support services. We will ensure that care teams are aware and able to share these resources with patients and families.
Concerns that people with dementia would have no inpatient care in the city (including for physical health needs).	Older people's wards at the General Hospital which have expertise in supporting people with dementia and that there will be no changes to these services as part of these current proposals (this was very reassuring to carers).

Concerns about availability of NHS community support for people with dementia	Described in detail the services provided by the local NHS, including Community Mental Health Teams, Memory Services, Admiral Nurses. Described how these teams work, for example in people's homes and inreach into care/nursing homes. Described how focus is always on supporting people in their own setting as this is best for the patient with dementia. Described the scenarios when an admission to a specialist dementia ward would be required (extremely aggressive behaviour or disinhibition which cannot be managed in the community) and how the vast majority of people with dementia would not ever require this level of care.
Concerns about increasing demand for dementia care over time	Described the national approach of supporting people to live well with dementia, e.g. work happening nationally and locally to improve environments and public awareness so that society was better equipped to adapt to supporting people with dementia. Examples of dementia friendly towns and high streets, and how this was happening in Southampton. Described ability to flex bed numbers over time, constantly reviewing demand and capacity. Aspiration to further develop community offer and improve the way we work in partnership with voluntary sector in the city.
Comments on the extent to which local authority lead officers are aware of the proposals	Local authority partners have been informed about the proposals via a Southern Health stakeholder update. Frontline social workers are aware. The Trust has also written to local authority lead officers to further ensure they are aware of proposals and to seek views. The Chair of both Southampton Carers Partnership Board and Hampshire Carers Partnership Board have been involved in discussions about the proposals.
Concerns that Southampton residents admitted to wards in Basingstoke or Gosport would be discharged to nursing homes in those areas, rather than closer to home.	Reassured that the Trust always works to find placements for people as close to their home community as possible, and this would continue irrespective of where a patient was admitted.
Comments on the extent to which GPs in Southampton are aware of the proposals	The Trust will ensure GPs in the city are made aware of the proposals if not already.

3. Next steps

The Trust is confident that the engagement carried out has been meaningful and has provided a range of opportunities for local people and groups to share views. Following the feedback received, the Trust will undertake the following:

- Ensure that the transport support offer, and the process by which this will be provided, is widely communicated with care teams (see Appendix 2).
- Ensure that links to key information about support available to people in the community and via the local acute hospital is shared on the Trust website and with care teams.

- Ensure that people travelling from further afield to our hospitals in Gosport and Basingstoke are able to benefit from more flexible visiting hours, are aware of other methods for staying in touch with patients, and receive additional support upon arrival.
- Link with partners to explore what more can be done to improve access to information and signposting for carers
- Continue to work in partnership to join up support between NHS and voluntary sector organisations in Southampton
- Continue to seek investment and develop community-based NHS memory and dementia services in Southampton, in line with the national dementia strategy and best available evidence.

There are a number of additional conversations and meetings which are planned to take place and, the Trust hopes to be able to update on the outcome of these at the HOSP meeting in October.

Separately, but linked to some of the views shared during this engagement, the Trust is exploring establishing a carers' 'hardship fund' to support people whose caring responsibilities put significant additional financial pressures upon them.

The Trust would like to thank colleagues from Communicare Southampton, Caraway, Unpaid Carers Southampton and Healthwatch Southampton for their support and guidance during this engagement period.

In light of the insights provided in this report, and the steps outlined that the Trust will carry out in response, the Trust seeks the approval of the HOSP to continue with the proposed changes.

APPENDICES FOLLOW

- 1. Engagement activity**
- 2. Transport support offer**

Appendix 1: Communication and Engagement activity conducted

Date	Activity	Stakeholder(s)
Ongoing to June	Conversations with frontline staff and carers	Individuals providing care and care teams in the city. Carers of patients in Beaulieu Ward.
May	Letters to local MPs and Councillors with overview of proposals, seeking views and offering meeting	Alan Whitehead MP, Julian Lewis MP, Cllr Fielker and Cllr Kaur
June	Detailed proposal and discussion at Southampton HOSP	HOSP members
19 July	Southampton Community Engagement Group	Local community representatives and groups in the City
27 July	Correspondence with Cllr Barbour	Cllr Barbour kindly identified groups in the City with whom we should engage
1 September	Southern Health Friday Carers Group	Carers for a range of patients
14 September	Southern Health Carers, Family and Friends Group (x2)	Carers of people under the care of Southern Health
19 September	Caraway Carers information event (Bitterne)	Carers, Caraway, Admiral Nurses
21 September	Unpaid Carers in Southampton Community Event (Portswood)	Carers, Unpaid Carers in Southampton
22 September	Online evening engagement event	Carers, Healthwatch Southampton, Hammersley Homes
24 September	Romsey Dementia Action Group open event (approx. 40 individual conversations)	Carers of people with dementia
28 September	Southampton Mental Health Network	Mental health service users, carers, and organisations in the City
September	Southampton Community Conversations	Community Partners including Healthwatch Portsmouth, Alzheimers Society, Southampton Council, Testlands Academy, Community Kettle
September	Article in Southern Health Stakeholder Update newsletter	Approx 500 stakeholders across Southampton and Hampshire
September	News article on Southern Health website (on Front page)	Approx 34,000 visitors per month
5 October	Conversation with local domiciliary Care organisation	Right at Home
9 October	Meeting with Dementia Friends lead	Dementia Friends (Alzheimer's Society)
TBC (contacted and liaising to arrange meeting)	Alzheimer's Society Southampton	
N/A	Individual conversations and feedback (multiple)	Various stakeholders who contacted the Trust following communications and outside of events/meetings

Appendix 2: Details of transport support offer

1. Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust recognises that, due to the change of purpose of wards at the Western Hospital, some people may need to travel further to visit people for whom they have a caring responsibility. In light of this a transport support offer has been put in place.
2. This support offer is open to people who are residents of Southampton or South-West Hampshire, who have caring responsibilities for a patient who has been admitted to either Parklands Hospital, or Gosport War Memorial Hospital's dementia inpatient wards.
3. The offer entitles people to receive transport support, on a case-by-case basis, tailored to their individual needs.
4. The offer may include support with transport costs and/or transport methods.
5. The offer can be accessed by speaking with any member of the care team. Following this conversation an agreement will be made about the transport support required.
6. The support will remain available until the patient has been discharged from hospital.
7. This support offer will be reviewed periodically by the Trust. If any changes to the offer are proposed, the Trust will inform the chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel.