

North Herts & Stevenage PCT

Adult Care and Health Scrutiny Committee

VICTORIA AND ELIZABETH COURT, GRAVELEY, STEVENAGE

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Purpose of report

This report was requested by Councillor Roma Mills for scrutiny by the Committee following concerns raised by the Community Health Council about the need for consultation.

The purpose of the report is to inform the committee of work undertaken by North Herts & Stevenage PCT to commission Mental Health Services for Older People at Victoria and Elizabeth Court in partnership with Adult Care Services, Hertfordshire Partnership Trust, Community Health Council and Beds and Luton Community NHS Trust, to ensure services meet the needs of the local population.

The report gives demographic and service availability information and highlights potential and actual gaps in service provision.

Summary

The work of the stakeholders group has ensured no closure of beds at Victoria and Elizabeth Court but indicates that they may need to be used in a different way. North Herts & Stevenage PCT will commission additional capacity to finalise the long term option with consultation as necessary. In recognition of the very specific needs of EMI patients, Adult Care Services and North East quadrant PCT's have agreed to fund a 12 month commissioning post for this client group. The final outcome is a commitment to the needs of patients. The commissioners acknowledge their responsibility to patients expecting a 'bed for life'.

Conclusion

The PCT has actively encouraged joint work on this issue as one mechanism to ensure initial consultation has occurred at a very early stage.

In respect of a formal process the PCT is open to consulting on the options when further clarity has been achieved (i.e. more details on the options to give

stakeholders a more informed basis for comment). We would need to take legal advice on the scope and nature of the consultation.

Having considered the information in this report, the Scrutiny Committee will need to discuss and decide if they wish to make any recommendations to North Herts & Stevenage PCT.

Background

Victoria and Elizabeth Court is a purpose designed and built facility owned and managed by Beds and Luton Community NHS Trust. The first unit Elizabeth Court, opened in May 1998 and Victoria Court in December 1998. The units were built to facilitate the closure of Fairfield Hospital and designated for the use of elderly people with dementia (EMI) and has 54 beds. There are 2 patients remaining from Fairfield Hospital.

The tender was for 5 years which is due for renewal in 2004.

When Fairfield Hospital closed, Elizabeth Court filled very quickly with patients. Victoria Court initially opened with vacancies as many of the patients in Fairfield Hospital were so frail their main need was for general nursing care rather than the specific skills of a dementia care unit. As it would have been uneconomical for beds to remain empty, it appears beds were used to provide an interim placement for patients who were waiting for long term nursing or residential care. However, gradually the beds filled with patients requiring NHS EMI Continuing Care including 2/3 patients at any one time waiting for an ongoing residential or nursing placement.

It would appear five beds are allocated to EMI patients from QEII Hospital.

Since April 2002 patients have been admitted to the unit in accordance with Hertfordshire Continuing Care policy, which follows national guidance. This requires re-assessment after 3 months and then an annual review to ensure patients continue to meet the NHS criteria.

Since December 2002, 9 beds at Elizabeth Court have been jointly funded by Beds and Luton Community NHS Trust, Adult Care Services (HCC) and North Herts and Stevenage PCT. The funding allowed 9 beds, temporarily closed due to cost pressures within Beds and Luton Community NHS Trust, to be re-opened. These beds have been used as interim care beds for individuals assessed and awaiting EMI nursing home placements. This has helped to relieve pressure on acute and mental health wards where assessment beds have been 'blocked' by people waiting for either Nursing Care EMI or Residential Care (DCU). This has been acknowledged by Adult Care Services and Health as improving the quality of care for a number of patients who are being cared for in a more appropriate environment.

During this period, progress has also been made on the full business case submitted by Herts. Partnership Trust (HPT) in November 2001 to upgrade inpatient facilities in the Lister Mental Health Unit. This has required Fairlands Ward to reduce to 14 assessment beds with transfer of the respite provision to

Victoria and Elizabeth Court. Two beds have fully transferred with a further two beds to be made available as vacancies occur in the unit.

History of events

Following information about the closure of beds at Victoria and Elizabeth Court, the Joint Commissioning Partnership Board (JCPB) invited stakeholders to a meeting to discuss the implications and possible solutions to the problem.

Stakeholder meetings were attended by representatives from:

- Beds & Luton Community NHS Trust
- Herts Partnership Trust – Mental Health Services for Older People
- Joint Commissioning Partnership Board
- Adult Care Services (HCC)
- North Herts & Stevenage PCT
- Community Health Council
- Herts and Beds Strategic Health Authority

The first stakeholder meeting took place on 3rd July 2002 with a remit to take note of the current financial difficulties affecting Beds and Luton Trust and specifically Victoria and Elizabeth Court and to review options in order that the 9 closed beds should be re-opened as soon as possible.

It became apparent when officers from North Herts & Stevenage PCT and the Joint Commissioning Partnership Board tried to investigate the original contract it was unable to be located due to the large number of re-organisations within the local health economy.

The Stakeholder group met on three more occasions and in November 2002 an agreement was made between all parties to open the 9 beds with funding from Beds & Luton Community NHS Trust, North Herts & Stevenage PCT and Adult Care Services. This was to be an interim measure until a more informed decision could be made. An operational policy was drawn up in November 2002 for the use of the 9 beds.

In December 2002 Beds and Herts Strategic Health Authority requested North Herts & Stevenage PCT to review the options for 9 beds to be re-opened as soon as possible and future commissioning arrangements for Victoria and Elizabeth Court.

The PCT stakeholder review meeting established a small Working Group which would:

- Review current working arrangements at Victoria and Elizabeth Court
- Include finance and commissioning aspects
- Review the impact of 4 respite beds transferred from Fairlands Ward
- Present options for the short term use of these beds

The small working group represented:

- Adult Care Services (HCC)
- North Herts & Stevenage PCT
- Herts Partnership Trust
- Beds and Luton Community NHS Trust

This group met on 3 occasions and presented a preliminary report to the Stakeholders on 22nd July 2003 with an option appraisal final paper presented on 29th September 2003.

Four options were considered by the Stakeholders.

1. Do nothing. This requires leaving 9 beds empty as they are not funded. The remaining 45 beds to be used for NHS Continuing Care and respite.
2. Formalise the current temporary agreement for 9 beds (funded by Herts County Council, North Herts & Stevenage PCT and Beds and Luton Community NHS Trust).
3. Transfer one or both units to the private sector to allow for a mix of NHS Continuing Care and EMI nursing home provision.
4. Transfer 10 NHS Continuing Care places from St. Christopher's Nursing home in Hatfield to Victoria and Elizabeth Court releasing 10 EMI Nursing Home placements for local residents.

The meeting agreed to continue the current use of the 9 beds and asked for some specific technical and operational issues to be clarified specifically on options 2 and 4. North Herts & Stevenage PCT proposed commissioning additional support to finalise the long term option.

Demographic Data

- More and more people are living on to old age and this has significant implications for health and social services.
- The population of people over 65 in Hertfordshire is 156,444
- In North Herts & Stevenage PCT the number is 29,644 - the highest in the county.
- The projected increase in those aged 85+ in North Herts and Stevenage is 8% (Office National Statistics).
- It is estimated that around one quarter of people over the age of 65 suffer from depression and one fifth of those over the age of 85 are likely to experience dementia.
- Admissions of elderly mentally ill patients between 1 April 2003 and 31 August 2003 from North Herts & Stevenage PCT were 165 (HPT data)
- '**Forget me not**', published in January 2000 by the Audit Commission following an analysis of mental health services for older people, highlighted over a third of carers reported having difficulties accessing respite care.

Bed availability and demand by PCT quadrant:

Residential and Nursing Homes.

(Bed figures refer to Residential care in a Dementia Care Unit and Nursing Dementia Care exclusively. Information drawn from HCC Residential and Nursing Care – Market Analysis July 2003).

- a. Bed availability for North East quadrant. In November 2002 the availability for Residential care was 493 beds – by July 2003 this had reduced to 438.

In November 2002 the availability of Nursing care was 76 beds – by July 2003 this had increased to 100.

In each of these groups % availability at HCC contracted rates is 34.33%

In July 2003 there were 35 residential dementia care vacancies (across Hertfordshire) only 10 of these accepting HCC rates. Nursing Dementia care vacancies were 15 with only 1 accepting HCC rates.

- b. Current demand for Residential and Nursing Dementia Care.

At 7th August 2003 41 people in hospital settings were awaiting some form of long term dementia care.

- 17 patients awaiting Nursing Care
- 23 patients awaiting Residential Care
- 1 patient awaiting NHS Continuing Care

(These figures do not include those people waiting in the community)

The above demonstrates a continuing shortage of dementia care, residential and nursing care vacancies, leading to increased numbers of delayed transfers of care in Acute Hospital beds.

Occupancy rate remains at about 96%. Note there is only 1 patient waiting for NHS Continuing Care.

NHS EMI Continuing Care

The East and North Quadrant have access to the following NHS funded Continuing Care beds:

Seward Lodge (Hertford) – 20

Chelmsford Ward (Bishop's Stortford) – 5

Victoria and Elizabeth Court – 54

St. Christopher's (BUPA home in Hatfield) - 10

Views of other organisations

The following organisations were asked if they wished to add their views to this report:

Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust
Joint Commissioning Board
Adult Care Services
Beds and Luton Community NHS Trust

Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust

Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust (HPT) is responsible for community, day hospital and inpatient assessment facilities for older people with mental health needs serving the Stevenage and North Herts catchment area. At the Lister Hospital, there are two inpatient assessment wards – Fairlands ward, an 18-bedded ward for assessment of older people with dementia plus respite provision and Edenbrook ward, providing 15 beds for assessment of functional mental health conditions. Patients assessed as requiring long-term nursing care either via the NHS or other sources, do not receive this on site. The Trust therefore works in close liaison with a number of different agencies including Beds and Luton Trust, Adult Care Services and independent sector providers.

From 1999 onwards, the Trust began to experience increasing delays on Fairlands ward with patients assessed as requiring EMI Nursing Home provision but no placements being immediately available. Practice began to informally develop that these patients were transferred to Elizabeth and Victoria Court in order to wait for their permanent nursing home placement and thereafter these individuals moved on from Elizabeth and Victoria Court.

It is likely that the capacity to allow this to occur at Elizabeth and Victoria Court began to arise as a consequence of the decrease in the “home for life” patients and the overall number of available beds on the site therefore increasing.

Between the period 1st April 1999 and 31st March 2002, 21 patients were transferred from Fairlands ward to Elizabeth and Victoria Court as an interim arrangement before moving on to their permanent non-NHS Nursing Home.

The gradual closure of 9 beds at Elizabeth and Victoria Court by Beds and Luton Trust from early 2002 began to quickly impact on the assessment wards provided by HPT as there were neither NHS Continuing Care placements to move people onto or interim placements where nursing home patients could wait.

The number of delayed transfers of care steadily increased until by the end of 2002, it was noted that 11 of the 18 beds on Fairlands consisted of delayed

transfers of care, all of which were awaiting provision other than NHS Continuing Care.

Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust supported the decision made by Stevenage and North Herts PCT, Beds and Luton Trust and Adult Care Services to fund and re-open the 9 closed beds in Elizabeth and Victoria Court as temporary placements for individuals assessed and awaiting EMI Nursing Home provision. This was supported on the basis that previously and without formal agreement on the matter, this type of service had been provided by these units and that the lack of EMI Nursing Home provision in this part of the County was a critical issue adversely impacting on the role of the assessment beds managed by the Trust.

As a consequence of the 9 beds re-opening at Elizabeth and Victoria Court, a number of individual delayed transfers of care on Fairlands ward, were able to immediately transfer to these units to await their permanent placements thereby reducing pressures on assessment facilities. HPT has not subsequently encountered any significant delays with transfers of individuals requiring NHS Continuing Care.

During this same period, HPT was progressing a Full Business Case for major upgrade of its assessment wards at the Lister site. In particular, Fairlands ward was identified to be re-provided on the ground floor of the Mental Health Unit in new single room accommodation meeting the Department of Health's standards for single sex accommodation and improved privacy and dignity. In order to re-provide this ward within the available space, a decision was made that the ward would be provided as a 14-bed assessment ward with the 4 respite beds being transferred to Elizabeth and Victoria Court. The Trust acknowledges that this decision and rationale had not been well communicated to either Beds and Luton Trust or other interested parties such as the Community Health Council. This was not intentional. It arose through the significant changes of management personnel that were taking place at this time.

HPT is of the view that respite care is a critical component in supporting carers of older people with dementia and that this care can be provided more appropriately within the environment of Elizabeth and Victoria Court, rather than a busy assessment ward. This patient group are entirely compatible with those requiring NHS Continuing Care and require the same clinical nursing skills as are already available in Elizabeth and Victoria Court.

In order to ensure the necessary reduction in beds on Fairlands ward has been achieved, the Trust has worked closely with Beds and Luton Trust throughout the summer of 2003 in order to transfer the current recipients of respite care to Elizabeth and Victoria Courts, utilising beds that have become available from the 45 designated for NHS Continuing Care purposes. Staff of both Trusts have worked closely with carers and relatives in order to make the transition occur smoothly and effectively. Relatives and carers are reported to be extremely happy with the new arrangements. Fairlands ward has now

reduced to 14 operational beds and will move into its new accommodation in late October 2003.

Summary

HPT wishes to see Elizabeth and Victoria Court continue to provide high quality care for older people suffering from dementia. The model of provision needs to reflect recent changes in demand for different definitions of care and to embrace community based options such as respite care, which will potentially support more individuals and allow carers to manage their relatives at home with appropriate support.

Beds & Luton Community NHS Trust

Since opening, the Units had informally accepted patients who were waiting on Fairland's Ward at The Lister Hospital for EMI Nursing and residential care.

In 2002 the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Trust reduced the bed availability to 45 following 3 years of unsuccessful bids to increase the income received from Hertfordshire Health Authority using the SAFF process. The Units at that time were experiencing difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced staff resulting in high Bank and Agency usage, compromising our commitment to provide a high standard of Nursing and Medical Care to people who require NHS continuing care.

Following the emergence of PCT's the commissioning of Elizabeth and Victoria Courts moved from the Hertfordshire Joint Commissioning Agency to North Hertfordshire and Stevenage PCT, the PCT bought together all stakeholders and developed a culture of Partnership Working.

In October 2002 a partnership working party was set up to work together to resolve the issue of 9 closed beds. After some discussions the group agreed that the local Health Economy did not require the 9 beds to be opened for NHS Continuing care at that time, but that the local community required a facility to move patients who were awaiting placements to EMI Nursing and Residential Care from both The Lister Hospital Acute Trust and Fairland's Ward (HPT)

The Partnership working group recognised that by using one wing of Elizabeth Court for patients who had a diagnosis of Dementia, it would enable the skills and expertise of the staff to be used positively and continued to develop the close working relationships with both North Hertfordshire and Stevenage PCT, the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Trust, Adult Care Services and Hertfordshire Partnership Trust,

A joint temporary management arrangement was agreed by North Hertfordshire and Stevenage PCT, the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Trust, Adult Care Services and Hertfordshire Partnership Trust, with funding

being agreed by North Hertfordshire and Stevenage PCT, the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Trust Adult Care Services.

This has been a successful partnership arrangement, which has worked to provide a valuable service to the Local Health Economy.

A smaller partnership working group has been established and has made recommendations for the future usage of the 9 nine beds.

Hertfordshire Partnership Trust has made some changes to Fairland's ward in August 2003 to develop the Single Sex accommodation agenda. Elizabeth and Victoria Courts are currently accommodating 2 of the 4 respite beds and the future provision requires will be clarified within the partnership group.