

Update for Oxfordshire HOSC: Temporary Closure of City Community Ward

June 2019

At the end of May 2019 Oxford Health temporarily closed City Community Ward due to it not being possible to roster 24x7 shifts in accordance with Safer Staffing Guidance. The Trust and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group have suggested to HOSC that a range of options be developed over the summer and presented to HOSC at the end of September.

This paper provides background to the temporary closure decision and an update on progress.

City Community Ward, located at the Fulbrook Centre on the Churchill Hospital site in Headington, is one of eight¹ community hospitals with inpatient beds² run by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust serving the people of Oxfordshire. The purpose of the ward has been to provide general rehabilitation typically following a stay in an acute hospital. Each community hospital tends to share facilities with other services from a variety of providers. Other community hospitals provide a broader range of services including Minor Injury Units, Emergency Multidisciplinary Units/Rapid Access Clinical Units, First Aid Units, stroke rehabilitation, diagnostics and therapy services. The City site is co-located with two Older Adults Mental Health Wards (one for males, one for females) run by Oxford Health.

The rehabilitation contract held between Oxfordshire CCG and Oxford Health is designed to be based on episodes of care rather than the number of beds. However, there is a commitment in principle to maintain an agreed capacity: this was c.148 beds in 2017/18 and c.142 in 2018/19 and 2019/20. The number of beds is flexed seasonally to respond to changing needs. The number of beds will fall to 130-135 over the summer and increase back up to 145 or more for winter.

In June 2018 the Trust became concerned about its ongoing ability to staff the City Community Ward over the summer period. In actuality the Trust was able to maintain safe staffing at that point but reduced the number of beds from 18 to 12. This situation was maintained throughout winter and the Trust's ability to keep the

¹ Wantage Community Hospital is currently temporarily closed. The other community hospitals are: Abingdon, Bicester, Didcot, Henley, Wallingford, Wantage and Witney.

² Chipping Norton War Memorial Community Hospital does not have inpatient beds run by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.

hospital open was based largely on the extraordinary efforts of staff on the ward and the support of staff from the other community hospital sites.

Whilst adverts for registered nursing staff have run more or less continually during the period there were no applicants. In addition, at the end of April three registered staff members gave notice, each for different (and personal) reasons. This was escalated to the Trust Board and the decision made to close the ward on a temporary basis for safety reasons. This was discussed with system partners then formally communicated to HOSC on 8th May.

HOSC held an emergency meeting at the end of May to scrutinise the matter. At the meeting, Oxford Health and the CCG informed members that the system would review the options for City Community Ward over the summer and return with a view on preferred options at the end of September. OCCG agreed to provide a monthly update to the committee on progress.

City Community Ward was temporarily closed to patients on 31st May 2019. Of the 12 inpatients, 6 were from outside the City and repatriated to a community hospital closer to home. Of the remaining six who were local to the City, three were discharged home, one was moved to a local intermediate care bed, and one moved to Didcot Community Hospital.

Currently the Trust has 126 beds open across its community hospitals which is a slightly lower number than at the same time last year. Two additional stroke beds are scheduled to open on 1st July with a further two opening 1-2 weeks thereafter, taking the number of beds back to 130, in line with summer 2018.

This is the first update since the emergency meeting of HOSC and progress to update:

- A recruitment working group has been established by Oxford Health, in partnership with Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, to explore all avenues to encourage recruitment locally and nationally.
- A lead has been identified by Oxford Health and agreed at Oxfordshire A&E Delivery Board to work for the system in developing an options appraisal, drawing on input from system partners as necessary, with the objective of reaching consensus about a way forward.

An engagement plan is being developed that will ensure local stakeholders are involved as options are developed and considered for the future.