

Update for Oxfordshire HOSC: Temporary Closure of City Community Ward

September 2019

Current position

- The ward was temporarily closed to patients on 31st May 2019.
- Staff Consultation was completed on 7th June 2019. All staff members have been redeployed across Community Hospital wards and have settled well.
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OH) Patient Liaison Advice Service (PALS) continue to ask all community hospital inpatients if they experience issues with being visited by family members or being placed further away from home for their rehabilitation. This will enable them to look at the home location to see if there is a negative impact on patients displaced from City postcodes. There continue to have been no issues raised.

Recruitment

- To date OH have recruited the following posts for City Community Hospital
 - Band 7 Ward Manager
 - Band 6 Deputy Ward Manager
 - Band 6 Clinical Development Nurse
- OH have 8 Band 5 vacancies (registered nurses) out of an establishment of 13.9 WTE B5 staff and are in the process of interviewing candidates. Four new B5 members of staff have been recruited, and further interviews are taking place during the remainder of August and September.
- Partners have confirmed that their own band 5 staffing vacancies would not allow them to consider there being any staff surplus to their own needs who could be offered to OH.
- This is the hardest staff group to recruit. Therefore, OH are assessing whether the ward could employ different types of staff for example Nurse Associates (trainee nurses).
- External candidates recruited are going through employment check processes with a view to start dates September/ October.
- Once staff commence employment with OH they will be inducted on other community hospital wards in readiness for reopening City Community Hospital. All candidates are fully aware of the temporary closure of City Community Hospital.

Maintaining Bed Provision

- Currently OH have 130 beds open across all community hospitals, the same number of beds as this time for the last two Summers.
- Stroke beds remain at the full 20.

System Wide Planning

A system-wide group comprising representatives from Oxford Health, Oxford University Hospitals, Oxford Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxfordshire County Council and OxFed has been meeting on a fortnightly basis to consider three options (see below). Healthwatch and Age UK have provided stakeholder challenge to this work.

1. The conditions required for reopening City community beds in the Fulbrook Centre

OH is actively working towards reopening beds in City Community Hospital. This is dependent upon recruiting and retaining sufficient staff at all levels to ensure the unit remains safe. Recruitment in recent weeks has been encouraging and this remains the primary option.

2. If not at City community hospital, where else could beds be re-provided

It has been possible to reprovide beds across the other community hospital sites since the temporary closure of City community hospital, and these will remain in place until the City site reopens. This includes increasing the number of beds across the winter months to support the system at a time of high demand and pressure.

3. If not beds, then what other tangible offer could we make to the residents of Oxford City?

Oxford City, in common with other areas, has an ageing population. Between 158 patients with an OX1-4 postcode were admitted to a community hospital bed, of whom 59 were admitted to City Community Hospital during this time period. In other areas of the county, notably Henley, Abingdon and Witney, Oxford Health has set up “ambulatory” units where unwell patients can be assessed, diagnosed, treated and discharged home or admitted for a very short stay, without needing to go to the John Radcliffe or Horton Hospital. These units also offer “community outreach” where highly trained staff support people in their own home. All partners, including Oxford City GPs and OxFed and OUH have been reviewing what sort of service could be provided in this type of unit in Oxford City in the future. This type of unit is able to provide care for 1800-1900 patients a year.

Next steps

Oxford Health NHSFT Trust Board will consider whether it is safe to reopen City Community Hospital beds at the next Board meeting on September 25th, 2019.