

Brunswick Ward – Eliminating Mixed Sex Accommodation (Paper 57a)

Introduction and purpose

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust ceased accepting male admissions onto Brunswick Ward, the Brighton & Hove inpatient dementia ward, at the end of February 2016. This decision was taken as part of a trust-wide response to the latest CQC inspection of dementia services and the trust's statutory requirements to eliminate mixed sex accommodation.

This paper sets out for the Brighton & Hove OSC the background and the reasons why the decision was made and the provision for the Brighton & Hove population going forward.

Background

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is commissioned to provide acute inpatient dementia treatment and care services for the Brighton & Hove population. This service is provided on Brunswick Ward, part of the Lindridge Unit in Hove, close to the Mill View hospital site.

The unit provided services to both male and female patients in a single corridor ward. The full Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of all trust services in January 2015 highlighted shortcomings in the trust's dementia services relating to the statutory requirement of eliminating mixed sex accommodation.

The CQC guidance regarding the inspection of same sex accommodation states that:

“For every ward/inpatient unit that accommodates both men and women, the inspection team should assess whether the layout of the ward/unit meets the definition of providing accommodation that is ‘same-sex’.”

The guidance also states that inspectors should adhere to the Mental Health Act code of practice which states that:

“All sleeping and bathroom areas should be segregated, and patients should not have to walk through an area occupied by another sex to reach toilets or bathrooms. Separate male and female toilets and bathrooms should be provided, as should women-only day rooms. Women-only environments are important because of the increased risk of sexual and physical abuse and risk of trauma for women who have had prior experience of such abuse. Consideration should be given to the particular needs of transgender patients. A patient should not be admitted to mixed-sex accommodation.”

Since January 2015 the trust has been working with the local commissioners to implement improvements to the local Brighton & Hove dementia services. In February 2016 the CQC carried out a follow up inspection of the trust's dementia services. The feedback report highlighted a number of areas of significant improvement regarding the delivery of quality dementia services in Brighton & Hove; however the CQC levied an improvement notice on the trust regarding failings around the elimination of mixed sex accommodation across

our dementia services, particularly in Brighton & Hove.

During the year following the initial CQC inspection in January 2015 there were five individual incidents of sexual harassment as a result of the mixed gender environment on Brunswick Ward.

The trust implemented immediate measures to ensure trust-wide compliance with the statutory requirement around eliminating mixed sex accommodation. One of the key measures, as part of the overall trust plan, was to cease admitting females onto Brunswick Ward and managing the unit as a single gender male ward for the next twelve months.

The CQC were notified of the trust plan.

Trust-wide solution to eliminating mixed sex accommodation

Following the January 2016 CQC inspection, the trust created a plan to immediately eliminate mixed sex accommodation across the dementia services. This plan was supported by a thorough analysis of admission data for the dementia wards for quarter three of the 2015/16 year. Further data analysis was carried out in early March 2016 to examine admissions to Brunswick Ward for the whole of the 2015 calendar year. It is evident from this data that the best trust-wide solution, to enable all demand to be catered for within trust resources, would be to operate Brunswick Ward as a male only unit. Additional local options were considered, such as reducing the number of beds on the ward and swapping wards around on the Mill View campus. None of these proved viable as the options would not allow the trust to cater for the demand for dementia beds.

The plan is an interim solution to ensure regulatory compliance. The plan means that three wards across the trust would become single gender units which would allow the trust to manage all dementia admissions to wards that are either single gender or where single gender care and treatment is assured on a mixed gender unit via separate single gender corridors.

One of the single gender wards would be Brunswick Ward in Brighton & Hove. As Brighton & Hove only has one dementia inpatient unit, the impact is that female patients would have to be admitted to other wards outside of Brighton & Hove.

The interim plan will be in place for one year (February 2016 to February 2017). During this interim period the trust is committed to a longer term solution which would conform to single gender guidance. The longer term solution would remain a trust-wide solution. The plan for Brighton & Hove would mean that the dementia inpatient unit would move to Promenade Ward, a vacant ward (April 2016) on the Mill View hospital campus. Over the next year the ward would be refurbished as a mixed gender unit to fully comply with single gender guidance and regulations by accommodating male and female patients on two distinct corridors.

Impact and implications for Brighton & Hove patients

From March 2016 Brunswick Ward in Brighton & Hove has not been admitting female patients. This does not mean that there are no female patients being treated and cared for on the ward as the trust made a decision to allow all existing patient to complete their treatment on the ward they were admitted to. As a result currently 5 female patients are being treated on Brunswick Ward.

The CQC have been informed of this situation and the trust is ensuring that the personal safety, privacy and dignity of each female patient is assured through robust risk assessing, care planning and high quality nursing practice.

However, the implications of not admitting female patients onto Brunswick Ward over the next year is that female patients will be admitted to other dementia wards in the trust; which will either be in East or West Sussex. It is current practice to admit female patients to out of area units when female beds are not available in Brighton & Hove. However the trust's decision formalises this practice as part of the interim plan.

There are a number of potential impacts that this decision will have on female patients, their carers and families, the ward, their workers and communities. The impacts and plans to mitigate are as follows:

Distance and accessibility for female patients and carers

It is acknowledged that female patients will have to travel to other units outside of Brighton & Hove for the next twelve months. In line with the principles of the recent report “*Old Problems, New Solutions: Improving Acute Psychiatric Care for Adults in England, Feb 2016*”, no female will be expected to travel further than 30 miles for their care and treatment. Accessibility to units will be considered on a case by case basis and treatment will be offered at the most accessible unit to the individual, taking into account transport and carer’s requirements. However it is likely that the three units that will be used by Brighton & Hove females will be the Burrowes unit in Worthing, Iris Ward in Horsham and Beechwood in Uckfield.

The trust will work with patients and carers on a case by case basis to support transportation and travel to and from these units. The trust will work with local third sector and voluntary organisations to see what opportunities there are to support these journeys.

The wards

The wards receiving the Brighton & Hove female patients will work closely with the referring community teams and carers to ensure that all patients receive the highest quality care. Medical and clinical ownership will become the responsibility of the receiving ward and local teams will continue to ensure that treatment and care planning will be maintained across services.

A potential impact on Brunswick Ward becoming all male is the possibility of increased levels and incidents of violence and aggression. Evidence suggests it’s likely that incidents of violence and aggression on all male dementia wards reduces. In addition the trust is improving the alarm system on the unit to aid the management of such incidents.

Workers and communities

Workers supporting female Brighton & Hove patients in other areas will have to travel to liaise with ward teams and carers. Community teams will account for this when planning how the team supports patients to ensure that all patients receive the highest level care and treatment.

Community and ward teams will continue to liaise with carers and other third sector support organisations to maximize the support to female patients in out of area placements.

Brighton & Hove long term solution

Brunswick Ward does not provide the ideal environment for the provision of inpatient dementia care and treatment. The physical layout of the unit does not support the required compliance to the high levels of privacy and dignity as afforded through providing single gender accommodation. The shortcomings of the ward have been highlighted by the CQC and present a risk to personal health and safety of patients.

Brunswick Ward is part of the Lindridge site and as such is isolated from the other mental health inpatient wards provided on the nearby Mill View campus. The longer term solution allows for a full re-provision of the ward on the Mill View campus, garnering all the benefits of having all wards under one roof, such as support, shared staff and security.

The trust has acknowledged that compliance to eliminating mixed sex accommodation in dementia services is a high priority and therefore is committed to providing the correct long term estates solution to achieve compliance and to enhance the quality and standards of care. The full refurbishment of Promenade Ward will achieve this aim. An Estates Design working group has been established to ensure that the ward is future proofed and meets all the requirements of the patient group going forward. The team will work with staff, patient representatives and carers to ensure that the environment and facilities meet the needs of the Brighton & Hove population.

The new ward will cater for both males and females on the same unit. This will be achieved by have specific dedicated male and female corridors with build in ‘flex beds’ to cater for the change nature in gender demand.

Promenade Ward becomes vacant at the end of March 2016 and it is planned that refurbishment work will commence later in 2016 following the completion of the design and internal sign off phase. It is hoped that the new ward will be operational in February 2017 as part of the overall trust-wide solution to full compliance around eliminating mixed sex accommodation.

Summary

Brunswick, the dementia inpatient ward for the population of Brighton & Hove is not compliant with the national requirements for eliminating mixed sex accommodation. Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has been required, by the CQC regulator, to find compliance solutions.

Following data and practice analysis a trust-wide solution has been found. The long term solutions means that Brighton & Hove have had to adopt an interim solution whereby female patients will have to be treated out of the local area, but remaining in trust care for the next twelve months.

The long term solution will provide a fully compliant ward on the Mill View campus that offers enhanced facilities and environment.

It is acknowledged that the interim solution will have impacts on female patients and their carers; however the trust and partners will do all it can to mitigate and minimize the impact of women receiving treatment out of area for the next year.