

Report to: **East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

Date: **20th March 2008**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Older People's Mental Health Services – reorganisation of in-patient beds**

Purpose of report: **To outline Sussex Partnership NHS Trust's next phase of proposed changes to the provision of older people's mental health services in East Sussex.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOSC is recommended to:

- 1. Consider and comment on Sussex Partnership NHS Trust's proposals for in-patient beds currently located at Beechwood Unit, Uckfield and Milton Court Unit, Eastbourne.**
 - 2. Agree advice to the Trust on the level of consultation required with HOSC and with the public.**
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1. Background

1.1 HOSC has previously heard from Sussex Partnership NHS Trust about the Trust's strategy for older people's mental health services. The thrust of this is to reduce reliance on in-patient beds as further developments in treatments and therapies are expected to reduce need for this type of care. In place of in-patient beds, the Trust's strategy is to expand community based provision in line with national policy. The Trust also aims to ensure that older people with organic mental illness (age-related conditions like dementia) receive care in separate units from those with functional mental illness (conditions occurring at any age such as personality disorders or depression).

1.2 In March 2007 HOSC considered the Trust's plans to close in-patient beds at the Homefield Place Unit in Seaford as part of the move towards more community based provision. Patients with functional mental illness who had previously been admitted to Homefield Place were to be referred instead to St Anne's in Hastings or the Heathfield Unit at Eastbourne. HOSC was critical of the consultation undertaken on the closure of the inpatient beds at Homefield Place. The Trust acknowledged that there had been issues with the process and undertook to hold more discussions with local people to communicate the reasons for the changes and the alternative provision in place.

1.3 In September 2007, HOSC heard from Lorraine Reid, the Trust's Executive Director for East Sussex, that changes in the balance between community and in-patient care that were implemented earlier that year (including the changes at Homefield Place) had reduced the need for some admissions to hospital and provided a much more robust response for people who are admitted to the acute trust and may be experiencing mental illness.

2. Current proposals

2.1 The Trust is now moving ahead with the next phase in its reorganisation of mental health services for older people, specifically the reorganisation of inpatient beds. A briefing paper from Andrew Dean, Associate Director for Older People's and Forensic Services at Sussex Partnership NHS Trust is attached at appendix 1. This outlines further planned changes to inpatient beds which the Trust plans to implement from the end of June 2008.

2.2 The briefing paper outlines two proposed changes:

i) the closure of the 16 in-patient beds for patients with organic mental health problems at the Beechwood Unit in line with the move to community based provision of care. The unit is in Uckfield but serves patients from across the county. If the beds are closed, patients would go to St Anne's in Hastings.

ii) the temporary (for 2-3 years) move of 14 in-patient beds for patients with organic mental health problems from the Milton Court Unit in Eastbourne to the Beechwood Unit, pending the identification of a suitable site in Eastbourne at which point the beds would move back to Eastbourne. The reason for the temporary move is a request from the County Council's Adult Social Care department that the Trust accelerate their plans to remove services from Milton Court in order that Social Care services can be expanded at the site.

3. Issues arising

3.1 HOSC may wish to consider and question the Trust's representative on the following areas:

- Whether the benefits in terms of investment in community services from the closure of in-patient beds at Homefield Place have been realised.
- What lessons the Trust have taken from the consultation process in relation to Homefield Place and how these can be applied to consultation on the current proposals.
- Whether patients from the North East locality of the county could continue to access organic in-patient beds at Beechwood during the temporary relocation of the Eastbourne beds.
- What specific investments will be made in community based provision as a result of the closure of inpatient beds at Beechwood and whether this includes additional support for carers.
- Is the Trust committed to expanding capacity at St Anne's as necessary whilst enhanced community provision is being put in place?
- What work is underway to alleviate the transport issues generated by the increased centralisation of in-patient beds?
- What work is underway to identify a site in Eastbourne for the in-patient centre and how realistic is a 2-3 year timetable for return of the services to an Eastbourne base if a new build is involved?
- What consultation has already been undertaken on the Trust's overall strategy for two in-patient centres for older people's mental health services in East Sussex (one in the north east locality and one in the south west locality).

3.2 HOSC is also recommended to agree advice to the Trust on the level of consultation required on these proposals. In terms of consultation with the public, HOSC may wish to suggest particular groups which should be targeted and an appropriate timescale for response. One lesson from the consultation on Homefield Place was the need to involve local communities where inpatient units are located, as well as groups representing services users and carers.

3.3 The Committee will also wish to consider how the Trust can appropriately consult with HOSC as part of this process. Consultation requirements may differ between the permanent closure of inpatient beds at Beechwood and the temporary relocation of beds from Milton Court to Beechwood.

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Briefing Paper for the HOSC Meeting on 20th March 2008 regarding next phase in the reorganisation of Older People's Mental Health Services – East Sussex locality

This briefing paper details the next phase in the remodelling of Mental Health Services for Older People and specifically the further reorganisation of in-patient beds within the East Sussex locality.

The paper specifically focuses on Beechwood Unit and Milton Court Unit. Beechwood Unit is a 16 bedded acute assessment unit for clients with organic mental health problems. It is within the North East area of the East Sussex locality and is based in Uckfield. Milton Court Unit provides 14 acute assessment beds for clients with organic mental health problems and is within the South West area of the East Sussex locality and based at Eastbourne. This paper gives an overview of the plans for the proposed closure of Beechwood Unit by the end of June 2008 and the relocation of Milton Court In-Patient Unit from Eastbourne into the Beechwood Unit on a short-term basis (2-3 years) at some point after this date.

Lorraine Reid, Executive Director for East Sussex has previously made presentations to the Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee in which she set out the detail of in-patient services being modelled around need and what we term functional and organic illnesses. This reduces the potential for age discrimination and enables those whose mental health needs are not specific to the ageing process to be treated in the most appropriate setting. She also detailed that current practice (should an admission be required) is that for people to be admitted to one of the in-patient units at Eastbourne, Uckfield or Hastings wherever the bed was available with care being taken to locate them as close to home as is reasonably possible. She also assured the Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee that we have no intention of removing in-patient services from our core provided services but that we are modernising services in line with the recent guidance from the Department of Health, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, and Everybody's Business which clearly identifies a shift from bed-based provision to community based care offering greater choice for service users and their carers.

Rationale for this decision

In recent years, East Sussex Mental Health Services for Older People have relied far too heavily on the bed based provision with a lack of investment in community based services. The current strategic direction of the service, as previously communicated to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, is to move away from the dependency on bed based services and invest in community based services whilst at the same time providing a very specialist in-patient service to compliment the use of community services. As the Committee are aware, our intention has always been to move from the 7 in-patient units down to 2 in-patient centres – one for the North East and one for the South West. To that end we have already closed Homefield Unit and reinvested the money in community services. This had had a huge impact. The Liaison Service which was funded from the closure in the first 12 months has seen 1300 referrals in the acute hospitals and Community Services have increased their activity three-fold.

East Sussex Mental Health Services for Older People currently provide extended hours services within community teams across both areas. This service was part of a short-term project to ascertain if this would improve access and throughput in service provision. This has been a success. However, the funding stream for this service is coming to an end in June and we have been required by the PCT to continue providing this service with costings from within service redesign. In closing Beechwood we would be able to sustain the extended hours teams across both areas and increase capacity within community services.

Beechwood Unit does not just serve the clients of Uckfield area. All in-patient services within the Older People's Mental Health Service are cross-county. There are people from Eastbourne, Seaford, Hastings, Hailsham etc within this unit. This unit only provides organic assessment. Any

functional assessments are already carried out within the St Anne's Centre in Hastings for the North East region. Therefore, closing Beechwood would not change the current practice in any way.. St Anne's has an organic assessment unit and all clients requiring assessment who have previously used Beechwood would be referred to St. Anne's just as functional clients are currently.

There are currently 9 clients within Beechwood and of these 8 are categorised as delayed discharges. Therefore the service is not functioning as an acute unit. With the assistance of our Social Service colleagues we anticipate that all clients who are currently delayed discharges will be suitably accommodated by the end of June. If we were able to close Beechwood we would then move the clients from Milton Court into Beechwood. This is specifically proposed as a result of the review our Social Service partners have carried out on their directly provided care and their request that we remove services from Milton Court. This arrangement would be an interim arrangement whilst premises were located to amalgamate Heathfield and Milton Court into the in-patient centre for the South West area.

It is acknowledged that moving Milton Court from Eastbourne to Uckfield creates further travelling for visitors and that may cause some problems for relatives but, as stated previously in previous briefings to HOSC, the in-patient beds used within the service are now used across the whole of East Sussex and are not specific to a locality. If a client needs admission then bed resources are used wherever the bed is available. We try to facilitate wherever possible to make it as close to home but we do not have units in every town.

Specific Issues

The closure of Beechwood would result in the patients that currently receive care there being cared for at St Anne's. This would come in line with the current procedures for functional assessment of clients at St Anne's for the North East area, and we would be consolidating all organic assessment beds at St Anne's.

There is capacity within the current St Anne's Unit to increase the number of beds if required. This may be facilitated for a short time until the releasing of resources can be used within the community setting as it is acknowledged that there will be a reduction of beds before the increase in community resource is actioned.

From a transport perspective, St Anne's is as accessible as Beechwood.. The issue of transportation has been looked at for both the movement on a short term basis of Milton Court to Beechwood and the closure of Beechwood which would mean an increase in the St Anne's throughput. There has been no firm decision made on transport. There has been a suggestion of providing some sort of transport for people in Eastbourne who needed to visit relatives at Beechwood. However, as the service is already working in a cross-county way, people currently may have to travel further than they wish to visit their loved ones if the only bed available is in another area. Therefore transport may not be more of an issue that it currently is, even with the closure of Beechwood and the move of Milton Court to Uckfield.

Consultation

Beechwood

Andrew Dean, Associate Director has asked the Health and Scrutiny Overview Committee for its advice on consultation issues. The result of an informal discussion with HOSC is the production of this briefing paper for the Committee to consider their advice.

In-patient services are a core function of Mental Health Services for Older People and it is not envisaged that we will remove this function. We are rationalising our core resource to the needs of the population and the changing direction from the Department of Health of in-patient to community based services. We have provided acute organic assessment in the North East area via Beechwood and St Anne's and will continue to provide it at St Anne's as the central in-patient centre for the North East.

Milton Court

We understand that consultation on the Adult Social Care proposals for Milton Court has already been undertaken as part of the directly provided services review, with oversight from the Council's Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee. Therefore we understand that the removal of the NHS beds from Milton Court to another location in the short term may not be a consultation issue. However, HOSC would be able to advise us more appropriately on that. The move of Milton Court to Beechwood is to help our partners. We are not intending to move organic assessment from the South West area. This is an interim placement until better premises can be allocated to provide the in-patient centre within the South West. This may well be a new build. This is currently being discussed within the Estates strategy for the Trust and any new build would be based within the Eastbourne area

Andrew Dean**Associate Director for Older People's and Forensic Services
Sussex Partnership NHS Trust****11th March 2008**