

MEETING: Trust Board 16 May 2007

TITLE: Feedback from SHA mixed sex wards review

SUMMARY: Attached is the feedback letter from the SHA, following their visit to review our management of mixed sex accommodation.

Their recommendations support the action that is already being planned. In addition, the bed management policy is being reviewed, as this was noted to be out of date, and bears little relation to the current ward reconfiguration.

ACTION: For information

REPORT FROM: Deborah Wheeler, Director of Nursing & Clinical Development

Financial details supplied/checked by:

(Name of finance officer)

Recommendations contained within this paper have been checked for compliance with relevant statute and regulations/directions/policy as follows:

Elimination of mixed sex ward accommodation, Department of Health, 2005

Healthcare Commission core standards C13

PEAT assessment



April 17th 2007

Deborah Wheeler
Director of Nursing and Clinical Development
The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust
Magdala Avenue
London
N19 5NF

Dear Deborah

Re: Mixed Sex Accommodation

Thank you for hosting our visit to the Trust on the 3rd April. I write to confirm our feedback to the Trust.

The purpose of our visit was to understand the Trust's issues in relation to elimination of mixed sex accommodation. The Whittington had been flagged due to the following indicators:

- Health Care Commission patient survey scores
- Peat Self-Assessment
- December 2006 self assessment which highlighted the problems with the delayed move.

As you are aware Mixed Sex Accommodation and the provision of a 'dignified service' remains a priority for patients and continues to have a high level of ministerial and media profile.

The criteria that we used for our visit was as follows:

1. Is there separate toilet and bathroom facilities and single –sex sleeping areas for men or women? Is it possible to reach bathrooms and toilets without passing through areas occupied by members of the opposite sex? (Ref: PEAT Assessment 2007)
2. How effective is the implementation of the operational policy for mixed sex accommodation as part of your bed management policy, how is it monitored? Including how breaches are reported to board
3. Feedback from the latest patient survey and complaints on the issue of mixed sex accommodation
4. Attempts to achieve single sex accommodation in areas that are exempt from reporting e.g. ITU/HDU/CCU etc.
5. Provision of training for staff with regard to privacy and dignity and use of Essence of Care benchmarking.

London Strategic Health Authority

Chair: Dr George Greener CBE

Chief Executive: Ruth Carnall CBE

Our findings:

1. We were delighted to visit the new wards in the **A block**. This PFI facility which has been open for five months complies with all the latest design standards with a selection of single and 4 bed bays. These are all enclosed and have dedicated en-suite facilities.
2. **The Great Northern Ward Block**. We recognise that this area presents more of a challenge; due to the physical layout of the wards in this block it is difficult to manage effectively the mixed sex issues, particularly around privacy and dignity. You advised us that as part of the PFT scheme, the wards will be upgraded to Estates Category B. It was acknowledged that whilst this would concentrate on upgrading the physical fabric, there could be opportunities to improve privacy to the bed bays and enhance some of the sanitary accommodation. The suggestion to add screens, or even enclose the end of the open bed bays was commended. Access to adjacent sanitary accommodation would remain a problem for a number of bed bays though, particularly those centrally situated. The Trust advised that they are considering reducing the six bed bays to four beds. It was suggested that part of the freed up space could provide an opportunity to add an en-suite toilet or shower to these bays. It was agreed that this should be considered. We noted that the single bays were not always occupied by members of the same sex as those patients in the larger bays.
3. **Kenwood Wing**. The Trust has taken action to address the issues of mixed sex accommodation by a combination of management and physical measures. The provision of separate bays with solid screens and male and female zones have been created by centrally locating the nurses' stations. Designated toilets are also provided to either end. These measures are all in accordance with the Department of Health guidance for Mixed Sex Accommodation issued in 1998 (HSC1998/143). This has been superseded by the Core National Standards presented in Standards for Better Health (21 July 2004). You reported that you intend to upgrade this block further, with a view of using it for maternity services. We were shown an example of a ward currently being upgraded which, it was agreed, will enhance privacy and dignity further.
4. We were happy to note that the policy at the Trust is not to allow any mixed sex bays. This was evidenced in the wards visited.
5. With occupancy rates exceeding 90%, combined with considerable variability of admissions, and infection control arrangements, it is recognised bed allocation in bed bays difficult as wards that are acceptable one week, may not suit the patient mix the following.
6. You reported that staff have undertaken training on the 'dignity challenge' and that you have been undertaking work on the Essence of Care benchmark.
7. You reported your most recent PEAT assessment demonstrated an improvement of over 7%, and that 33% of your patients reported being cared for in mixed sex accommodation. (This is a reduction from 59% the previous year.) You advised us that the new ITU has partitions between patients and that all CCU patient beds are placed against one wall, an example of good

practice. It was also noted that Acute Admissions will be moving in to the new Block.

8. An observation of the visiting team was the lack of consistency of notices advising re hand washing at the entry to wards, this must make it difficult for staff and visitors alike. The provision of a corporate approach using symbols that can be understood by all is to be encouraged.

Summary and Actions

The Trust is clearly aware of the issues and has demonstrated that they are dealing with this on a day to day basis. The mixed sex accommodation audit undertaken in December 2005, and repeated in February 2007 highlights areas for further action. The Trust reported that they are going to update their bed management policy in order to respond effectively to mixed sex accommodation, there is an expectation that this policy will be regularly monitored and breaches reported to the Board.

The proposed works to the Great Northern Block will provide an opportunity to improve some of the perceived shortcomings. Consideration should be given particularly to those bed bays that are centrally located as they are the most overlooked and isolated from sanitary accommodation.

The work to Kenwood Wing will address the immediate problems, particularly if is given over entirely to Maternity. The Trusts longer term strategic plans are to replace this block. This has been discussed with Trish Morris-Thompson, the Chief Nurse.

Should you require any clarification on the feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Stubberfield
Chief Nurse Directorate

cc Tony Wordley – Provider Agency
Georgie Herskovits – Provider Agency