



BRIEFING – Changes at Chester-le-Street Community Hospital

The Medicine and Emergency Care Division at County Durham and Darlington FT is planning some changes at Chester-le-Street Community Hospital to expand the use of the day hospital and outpatient clinics to prevent admissions and reduce reliance on beds and treat more patients closer to home.

This is part of a wider transformation of services to improve the patient experience and reduce length of stay.

It follows changes made at UHND and Darlington Memorial Hospital to streamline care and increase the range of services we provide as an alternative to hospital admission.

The Trust will continue to see and treat the same number of patients, but more will be treated without hospital admission, and the aim is to treat all patients more quickly and more effectively.

Rationale:

The Trust has a longer than average length of stay, which costs the Trust around £8 million a year. We have patients in hospital beds who either did not need to be admitted, are awaiting discharge, or who could be discharged earlier if our processes were improved.

Recent changes (see previous briefing attached) are helping the Trust avoid around 20 unnecessary hospital admissions a day and are streamlining and reducing delays in our emergency pathway, while seeing and treating the same number of patients as before.

We now need to realise the benefits of these improvements for patients by ensuring timely discharge from the acute and community hospital system.

Objectives:

The objectives are therefore:

- To reduce average length of stay for patients in UHND and Chester-le-Street, and ensure more timely discharge

- To maintain an appropriate level of capacity for patients requiring step down care in Chester-le-Street
- To develop the day hospital as a service which facilitates early discharge and maintains patients in the community, avoiding unnecessary acute admissions
- To increase the number of outpatients seen at Chester-le-Street

Planned changes:

The beds and the day hospital will be run by one team, increasing flexibility between the services

Bed numbers will be reduced from 43 to 19, with beds focusing on patients who will benefit from step up and step down care and rehabilitation.

The beds will be based on Ward 1, with the facilities on Ward 2 remaining available for flexing capacity up and down, if required.

The Trust is discussing with the commissioner the opportunities for increasing outpatient clinics at Chester-le-Street.

Issues for staff:

We anticipate that these changes will take effect by 30 September.

Discussions will be taking place with staff who are affected to identify suitable alternative roles at Chester-le-Street, Shotley Bridge and UHND. No staff will be made redundant.

Working with stakeholders:

These changes are about improving the effectiveness of Trust processes, in particular ensuring timely discharge.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these changes with partners and stakeholders.

Please contact Gill Findley on 0191 333 2396. gill.findley@cddft.nhs.uk.

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