

**Dorset HealthCare NHS Foundation Trust and NHS Dorset Clinical  
Commissioning Group**

**PAPER FOR DORSET HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
Update on changes to the Mental Health Urgent Care (MHUC) services, west of  
Dorset**

**PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

This paper will provide an update on the changes made to the Mental Health Urgent Care (MHUC) services in the west of Dorset

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is requested to note the progress made and on any further specific work to be undertaken.

**AUTHOR AND CONTACTS**

James Barton, Director, Pan Dorset Mental Health Services, Dorset HealthCare NHS University Foundation Trust.

[James.Barton@dhuft.nhs.uk](mailto:James.Barton@dhuft.nhs.uk)

Jane Brennan, Principal Programme Lead Review, Design and Delivery, NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group.

[jane.brennan@dorsetccg.nhs.uk](mailto:jane.brennan@dorsetccg.nhs.uk)

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Dorset HealthCare and NHS Dorset (now Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, (CCG,)) have been working together for the past two years to redesign the service offered to people in the west of Dorset who become acutely mentally unwell.
- 1.2 In line with national policy (No Health without Mental Health, DH, 2011), the two organisations have been developing services which enhance the delivery of recovery focused services aimed to support people in the least restrictive environment and provide greater choice regarding their care and treatment.
- 1.3 These proposals for change were publicly consulted upon and the changes have now been made; the new MHUC pathway is now operational.

## **2.0 CRISIS RESPONSE AND HOME TREATMENT TEAM**

- 2.1 There is now a fully operational Crisis Response and Home Treatment (CRHT) team which provides support and treatment to people in their own home or place of residence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 2.2 This team supports people who are acutely unwell and who require intensive support, but who, with this support, can remain in their own home or place of residence instead of having to be admitted to hospital.
- 2.3 The Crisis Response and Home Treatment Team facilitates person centred, individual, group and day interventions to people who are using their services. This involves the development of a selection of psycho-educational and supportive groups which can be selected and facilitated according to the needs of people using the services and provided in appropriate locations. Space has been maintained at Stewart Lodge and the Hughes Unit to facilitate such groups as and when needed.
- 2.4 The Crisis Response and Home Treatment team also facilitate arrivals, stays and departures within the Recovery House, commissioned by Dorset CCG and provided by Rethink Mental Illness.

## **3.0 RECOVERY HOUSE**

- 3.1 Dorset CCG have commissioned Rethink Mental Illness to provide a seven bedded Recovery House as part of the MHUC pathway.
- 3.2 The Recovery House, based in Weymouth, provides a safe, supportive environment for people who are acutely unwell and are being supported by the Crisis Response and Home Treatment Team.
- 3.3 The Recovery House is not an alternative to housing or to hospital, it is an enhanced form of support, another choice for people who do not need to come into hospital, but who, without this support, might not be able to stay at home whilst experiencing their crisis.
- 3.4 The service had an Open Day on 25 March 2013, which was well attended by stakeholders and the media. It opened on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013 to guests.
- 3.5 A number of clients have successfully used the Recovery House since it opened and it is proving to be a meaningful component on the MHUC pathway.

## **4.0 INPATIENT SERVICES**

- 4.1 In order to increase the intensive community support available to people who become acutely unwell, Dorset HealthCare and NHS Dorset proposed to close inpatient services provided at Stewart Lodge and the Hughes Unit.

- 4.2 It is important for care to be provided in the least restrictive environment and hospital, by its very nature, is restrictive.
- 4.3 By closing these two inpatient units, the organisations were able to invest much needed funding into ensuring people who become acutely unwell have the choice to be supported in their own home or the Recovery House and only come into hospital when they really need to.
- 4.4 Waterston Acute Assessment Unit, Linden Unit and Melstock House (for people over the age of 65) now provide the acute inpatient services for people in west of Dorset.
- 4.5 The original proposal was to have the fully functional Crisis Response and Home Treatment team in place by the end of March 2013 and to close the Hughes Unit at the same time. Stewart Lodge was then planned to close a month later.
- 4.6 Due to urgent refurbishment work taking place on Waterston and Melstock, it was not possible to close the other inpatient units until Waterston opened on 24 April 2013.
- 4.7 The Hughes Unit therefore closed on this date.
- 4.8 The Trust reviewed the proposal to keep Stewart Lodge open until the 30<sup>th</sup> April, a further month and assessed the risks associated with doing this.
- 4.9 Due to the need to increase the staffing within all inpatient units, the Trust did not have enough staff within the MHUC system to fully staff Waterston, Linden, Melstock and the Crisis Response and Home Treatment team and keep Stewart Lodge open.
- 4.10 The Trust could have hired agency staff to keep Stewart Lodge open, but the lack of consistency this would cause, and the concerns this would raise regarding standards of care would create potential risks to patient care.
- 4.11 Whilst this was a deviation from the proposed model and timescale, Dorset HealthCare made the decision to close Stewart Lodge at the same time as the Hughes Unit, in the interest of patient safety.
- 4.12 This was communicated with members of the Dorset Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 April 2013, as well as other stakeholders.

## **5.0 JUDICIAL REVIEW**

- 5.1 As the scrutiny committee will be aware, the decision to close the Hughes Unit and make the changes outlined above, was taken to judicial review by a member of the Hughes Unit User Group.

- 5.2 This appeal was subject to two court hearings. Dorset HealthCare met with the Claimant and their representatives to discuss her concerns and responded accordingly.
- 5.3 The claimant had further concerns, one of which being that Dorset HealthCare did not respond to her initial concerns in a timely manner (although, Dorset HealthCare did respond within the agreed timeframe), which were the subject of the second court appearance.
- 5.4 The case was dismissed by the court on 28 March 2013.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Joint Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the progress made to the Mental Health Urgent Care services for the west of Dorset.

James Barton  
Director of Pan Dorset Mental Health  
Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust

Jane Brennan  
Principal Programme Lead Review, Design and Delivery,  
NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group