Proposed Changes to Mental Health Services for Older People

In line with the national mental health strategy, ‘Together for Mental Health’ and the Cardiff and Vale Health Board’s own ‘Home first’ strategy, Mental Health services within Cardiff and Vale have proposed ambitious changes over the next couple of years.

These changes have been significant enough for the service to require the support and guidance of the Community Health Council and other social care and third sector partners, including service users and carers to ensure these ideas were tested thoroughly.

The aims set out the following changes to further improve mental health services for older people and the adult mental health rehabilitation services with a particular focus on services currently located at the Iorwerth Jones Unit. At a recent Health Board meeting the following changes were agreed:

- To relocate the functional mental health for older people inpatient assessment service from wards East 14 and 16 at UHL to the Llanfair Unit at University Hospital Llandough (UHL), and reduce the number of beds overall from 32 to 16 as a pilot to reflect reducing demand resulting from increasing numbers of people supported at home. Savings released from these changes will support further re-investment into much needed community services to ensure unnecessary hospital admissions are avoided and people remain at home where possible to receive their care and treatment. Throughout the engagement period service users and carers have expressed strong views as to where that investment should be targeted, with particular support for the idea of flexible day opportunities closer to peoples home and the concept of a ‘dementia navigator’ which is someone with lived experience acting as a ‘service guide’ to people newly diagnosed dementia. Other areas for investment will be targeted at services which are successful in diverting people from hospital admission such as liaison and crisis services.

- To relocate the two wards (Coed Y Nant and Coed Y Felin) at the Iorwerth Jones, that provide mental health services for older people with dementia from Iorwerth Jones to UHL (East 14 and 16), vacated by the functional mental health service move to Llanfair Unit. This will ensure that these patients are cared for in the most up to date dementia friendly and purpose built accommodation. In addition
the elderly patients in these wards will have easier access to physical healthcare services and be less isolated.

- Relocate the adult mental health rehabilitation ward from the Iorwerth Jones unit to the Llanfair Unit at UHL to be co-located with the mental health assessment services for older people with non dementia illnesses. This will allow greater opportunities to support individuals in private placements from the Cardiff and Vale area to return to local services.

- As part of the overall service changes, the mental health service has been required to co-locate their community teams in a central location on the UHL site due to concerns over the sustainability of four separate teams across Cardiff and Vale. This has now happened and we are already seeing reductions in admissions, a strengthening of our relationship with partners and our crisis teams working more effectively.

**Implementation**

Following face to face discussions with staff, patients and carers, to inform them of these confirmed changes, an implementation team will be set up at the end of June 2017, to oversee these changes.

The team will be made up of all partner agencies, carers and service users where possible, with an invite being extended to the Community Health Council to participate.

The focus of this team will be to safely transfer staff and patients into new environments and oversee community services improvements in terms of integration and further investment.

Regular face to face updates on progress will be offered to carers and the Community Health Council on these changes.

Ian Wile
Director of Operations
Mental Health Clinical Board