

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE

27 January 2012

Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust – Accident and Emergency Unit at Pontefract Hospital and the Trust's 5 Year Clinical Strategy - Delivering Safe, High Quality, Sustainable Healthcare

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides a framework for Members to be updated on the situation with regard to the Accident and Emergency Unit at Pontefract Hospital following the Unit's temporary overnight closure.
2. It also highlights to Members work taking place to develop and implement a 5 Year Clinical Strategy covering Dewsbury, Pontefract and Pinderfields Hospitals.

Background

2. In October 2011 the Mid Yorkshire Trust Board agreed the recommendation from senior clinicians to temporarily close the Pontefract Emergency Department overnight for patient safety reasons due to a shortage of experienced emergency doctors.
3. The briefing attached as APPENDIX 1 provides more background information.
4. Towards the end of last year the Trust published a 5 Year Clinical Service Strategy – "Delivering Safe, High Quality Sustainable Healthcare". In terms of taking the Strategy forward the Trust has engaged with staff, local people and key stakeholders to discuss long term options for its 3 hospitals - Dewsbury, Pontefract and Pinderfields. The purpose of the engagement was to listen to the views of staff, local people and stakeholders to develop a detailed business case for a proposed way forward which could include plans for a formal consultation. Part of the process will be for the National Clinical Advisory Team (NCAT) to examine the proposals to ensure they provide safe, effective and accessible services.

Recommendations

5. That Members:
 - a) Note the situation at Pontefract Hospital's Accident and Emergency Unit.
 - b) Note that a report covering the outcome of the Trust's engagement on its 5 Year Clinical Services Strategy, the findings of the NCAT report and any proposals as part of a formal consultation will be prepared for this Committee, provisionally, on 1 June 2012.

Bryon Hunter
Scrutiny Team Leader
County Hall, Northallerton
13 January 2012

Background Documents: None

The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Temporary overnight closure of Pontefract Emergency Department for patient safety reasons



Background

- National shortage of doctors with the right A&E experience.
- Mid Yorkshire has experienced difficulty in filling gaps for a long time, due to needing to cover 3 EDs.
- Shortage became critical on 1 November. 9 out of 23 posts are vacant and 1 further absence means 3 A&Es cannot be operated safely.
- Extensive and repeated efforts have been made to recruit with no success so far.



National recruitment

- Nationally posts exceed supply for middle grades. This is replicated regionally.
- National recruitment rounds:

	<i>Posts</i>	<i>Filled</i>	<i>Gap</i>
Round 1 2010	87	26	61
Round 2 2010	82	17	65
Round 1 2011	180	83	97
Round 2 2011	114	23	91



The scale of the problem

- MYT has 23 posts to support 3 emergency departments.
- Shortages of circa 3 posts last few years became 9 at the end of October.
- Risk assessment shows it is impossible to staff 3 emergency departments on 13 in post middle grades 24 hours a day.
- This left the Trust no choice but to take urgent and immediate action to avoid risking patient safety.



The national picture

- On a national basis a number of other Trusts are also experiencing this issue which is forcing them to take appropriate action.
- Trusts include North Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and The North West London Hospitals NHS Trust.
- There is a national task force that is being set up to review medical staffing issues. Working with the College of Emergency Medicine, the taskforce will look at recruitment, retention, progression and training of emergency clinicians.



Alternative options we looked at:

- Do nothing: Too few doctors. Shifts would not be covered. Unsafe.
- Recruit: Many attempts unsuccessful to date. Efforts continue.
- Staff with consultants 'acting down': Reduces senior cover on consultant rotas; supply concern; safety risks.



Why Pontefract?

- Safety and quality. Well used protocols with YAS for transfer. Back up diagnostics, acute and critical care other 2 sites.
- Activity. Daily attendees:
 - 130 PGI, overnight 19
 - 230 PGH, overnight 45
 - 200 DDH, overnight 40



A&E attendances

Types of patient:

	<i>Averages</i>	
	<i>Minors %</i>	<i>Majors %</i>
Pontefract	75 (97)	25 (33)
Dewsbury	60 (120)	40 (80)
Pinderfields	50 (115)	50 (115)



Emergency care at Pontefract Hospital

What sort of patients was the emergency department at Pontefract designed to care for:

Yes	No
Minor injuries (sprained ankle)	Stroke
Minor illness (chest infection)	Trauma
Admissions for c 48 hours protocol driven	Major medical illness needing admission
Ambulances with minor illness and injury	Major surgical illness needing admission
Gynaecological problems but admitted in PGH and DDH	Ambulance patients who are critically ill or injured
Children for assessment day time	



Temporary service change

- Aimed to make the smallest change possible to create a safe service across all 3 sites temporarily.
- Reopen once a sufficient number of middle grades can be recruited.
- Aimed to maintain the most service when people need it.



Board decision

- After careful consideration, on 20 October, the Trust Board approved the recommendation from senior clinicians to temporarily close the Pontefract A&E from 1 November every night from 10pm to 8am for patient safety reasons.



Public information campaign

- Public information was circulated throughout the Five Towns and surrounding areas to make sure that local people know how to access urgent NHS care
- 205,000 public information leaflets circulated:
 - 130,000 to households
 - 75,000 to around 1,500 key places throughout communities.
- This information has also been made available in a number of different languages.



The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals **NHS**
NHS Trust
Bringing together community and hospital services

Temporary overnight closure of Pontefract A&E from 1 November 2011

Closed every night - 10pm to 8am

To get the right NHS services when you need them urgently call

0345 605 9999

In an emergency, continue to dial 999.
Alternatively, if you are able, go to Pinderfields A&E (Wakefield) or your nearest alternative A&E.

Pinderfields A&E
Bar Lane entrance
Pontefract (via M62)
A&E entrance
Wakefield City Centre / A&E (Duncliffe Road)

Advice to the public

- Through the public information campaign, the public have been made aware of the temporary overnight closure and advised to:
 - Contact Urgent Care Direct on 0345 605 9999 for advice on getting the right NHS services urgently
 - Call an ambulance in an emergency
 - Attend another A&E department if they are able to do so



Arrangements in place

- Any patients that do attend Pontefract A&E whilst it is closed are able to speak to a member of staff who will advise them on the appropriate action they should take.
- We have robust and effective plans in place and the number and type of any attendances is reviewed on a regular basis.
- In addition, this temporary closure is reviewed on a monthly basis by Trust Board who consider recruitment updates and attendances.



1 November – 22 November

- 13 patients have attended the hospital and used the intercom - data collected in the first 5 days showed all but 2 knew the department was closed (this data is now being collected for any attendee on an ongoing basis)
 - 10 were given appropriate advice and redirected to alternative service providers
 - 3 were sent by ambulance to Pinderfields and there have been no adverse impacts on clinical outcome for these patients
- There has been no noticeable increase in attendances at Pinderfields and therefore no adverse impact on waiting times there



Recruitment update

- We are continuing to make every effort to recruit doctors.
- We have recently held interviews and appointed one middle grade who was a locum. This does not provide us with enough staff to re-open the department.
- The Deanery has also attempted to recruit to these vacancies as part of a national process but this did not result in any additional middle grades for Mid Yorkshire.
- We need to recruit a minimum of 6 additional middle grade doctors to have sufficient staff to re-open the department overnight.

