

North Yorkshire and York AMH

Esk ward: sustainability of inpatient provision

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update position regarding Esk Ward and review of the ward and service ability to sustain the safety of the ward remaining open.

1.0 Context

Within the service and trust, the ability to retain and recruit staff into the adult wards at Cross Lane Hospital has been a revolving issue for several years. Key actions to address this has been to introduce attractive roles to the unit, support an international recruitment campaign bespoke recruitment events, with limited success, and the piloting of a recruitment and retention premia.

2.0 Current state

The review of the ward's staffing escalation template was undertaken in October 2021 due to an increasing number of nursing staff vacancies and the imminent retirement of the locum consultant. On its review, whilst the staff available across all roles showed only a moderate % gaps in posts, the overall number and forecast of registered nurses across the band 5 and band 6 clinical lead posts was considered unsafe. In addition to access to nursing capacity, the unit still has not been able to recruit into the consultant psychology and psychiatry posts that are essential to delivering a multidisciplinary approach to patient care, providing effective treatment and support to the ward.

A key mitigating factor of using block booked agency was also lost due to changing pay conditions with the agency and offer of other providers.

Along side the core number of registered nurses that support care delivery, professional development and operational running of the ward, there exists:

- ward manager
- practice development practitioner
 - psychological therapist
- 15.05 wte HCA (over established to support the S136 suite and back of people on RNDP)
- 0.5 OT
- OT assistants

In addition, there is also senior posts supporting the unit:

- acting nurse consultant – covering the maternity leave of the non-medical AC trainee
- acting modern matron – pulled from the SWR crisis team

3.0 Joint review of current staffing

On 11 October, an urgent meeting was held to consider the options and ability to safely staff the ward, managing the level of clinical need for patients and the safety of the ward. The meeting included senior leads across the Trust responsible for operations and including clinical representation of nursing, psychiatry, psychology.

In this remedial review, 4 primary options were considered, against the chronic inability to recruit staff to the ward over time, retain staff and the increasing patient experience issues that are presenting, in part due to changing nature of patient presentations, but also the wards reduced ability to engage patients in a consistent way.

Risk	Benefits
Option One: Continue to manage the ward on a day by day basis at risk	
Option two: staff the unit using the senior nursing leadership in the locality and within AMH (requires 3.58wte to meet the requirements of the core rota)	
Option three: reduce the overall bed base to 10	
Option four: Close Esk ward and consideration of a flexible patient mix on Danby for 6 months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on trust bed capacity and need to support out of area admissions and secure out of Trust bed capacity • Increase of patient complaints due to loss or reduction of local access to beds • Impact on the lone impatient psychiatrist without a peer – mitigate by the crisis consultant on site • Risk that Danby medic confirms her intention to go to the Ripon community or Scarborough community posts that is due to be advertised • Inpatient staff leave due the change to in patient group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects remain staff resource to improve staffing on Danby and within the crisis team • Capacity to make sue of the operational and development leads to do targeted recruitment • Protects crisis and S136 responses, including the role of medic • Mitigate against patient experience and incident concerns • Protects operational and senior nursing capacity • Increases OT and psychological therapy capacity to Danby ward • Reducing the need for bank and agency staff and costs •

4.0 Preferred option

From the review, there was consensus from all those present at the review meeting that Option 4 was to be the joint recommendation for trust consideration with the following considerations:

- The ward remains closed for a period of up to 6 months and we are work in partnership with colleagues across PCN, local authority and CCG partners regarding a joint approach to recovery;
- That the current Esk patients are not decanted and supported on the ward until the end of October, reducing the number that need to be transferred to another ward and allowing them wherever possible to complete their treatment prior to discharge;
- The operational development leadership supports a project to proactively recruit into vacant post;s
- The released capacity accelerates the development of the international recruits, starting in December;
- The retention and recruitment premia is financially approved to protect against the loss of current staff at the Ayckbourn Unit – this is now an agreed pilot for 12 months.

5.0 Current State

The ward was temporarily closed on the 12th November 2021 and with safe management of patients and one transfer to Foss Park Hospital, York to complete their treatment. A full communications plan to support patients, their families and to inform the local community and partners was also developed and implemented w/b 25th October 2021. Remaining staff have been deployed to support Danby Ward, Cross Lane Hospital, the crisis team and community teams to ensure we provide additional support where needed. We have implemented a pilot re the use of recruitment and retention premia and there is positive progress re the internal recruitment project with 3 candidates appointed and further interviews scheduled.

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