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28 July 2011

Dear colleague,

I am writing to update you about the Trust's plans to replace existing inpatient mental health facilities with improved accommodation. As part of our five year plan to deliver these improvements, existing facilities will be de-commissioned gradually as the new facilities and alternative provision is developed. This is in line with the recommendations made following a public consultation by the PCTs in Lancashire during 2006.

Managing this transition successfully is an integral part of our overall strategy, which addresses issues around capacity and the current and future demand for beds which is showing a reduction thanks to the delivery of alternative provision in the community.

Although it is not possible to perfectly align the de-commissioning of one facility with the opening of another, our transition plan includes arrangements for the gradual closure of existing facilities in preparation for the new ones becoming operational.

As you will be aware the Trust and its PCT partners have recently concluded a Technical Appraisal Process which is recommending the provision of four inpatient facilities for Lancashire as follows:

- A new inpatient facility at Whyndyke Farm in Blackpool,
- The redevelopment of the Oaklands Unit on Pathfinders Drive in Lancaster
- The redevelopment of existing facilities at the Royal Blackburn Hospital site
- An inpatient facility in Central Lancashire (location to be confirmed following further engagement work).

The first phase of this plan detailing proposed transitional arrangements up until December 2011 has been presented to the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The OSCs have noted the proposals and acknowledged that the transition of services would be a journey in which the Trust and its PCT partners would take the views of others including scrutiny committees on various issues including dementia care provision and transport.

The inpatient reconfiguration will take place over the next five years and will involve the decommissioning of existing facilities whilst developing the new ones in parallel.

This means that the following wards will close:

- November 2011 L2 in Blackburn and Bickerstaffe in Ormskirk (older adult wards)
- November 2011 Stirling Ward, Parkwood in Blackpool (female adult ward)
- December 2011 L3 in Blackburn (older adult ward)

I would like to offer my assurances that there is capacity within the Trust's network of inpatient and community care to do this safely whilst maintaining a high level of care. The Trust's older adult inpatient services are particularly under occupied, with some wards running as low as 38% occupancy. It cannot and does not make sense to run half empty wards, nor does it represent good use of resources or best practice. More significantly there is a vast amount of both evidence and national guidance to suggest that care for older people is more effective when delivered in community settings.

Community services for older people are provided by Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs), Intermediate Support Teams, Hospital and Nursing Home Liaison services, and Memory Assessment Services. The development of these locality based community services has significantly reduced the number of people being admitted to hospital. This continued improvement of community services and less reliance on inpatient services is in line with the Department of Health recommendations and delivers a consistently higher and more person centred approach to care.

With regards to adult services, the significant investment in community services over recent years including crisis and home treatment teams, early intervention and assertive outreach services has also significantly reduced the number of inpatient beds that are required. The development of community services is continuing with the implementation of the stepped model of care, which is in line with the national approach to providing mental health services. The key principle is to provide access to services designed to meet a whole range of mental health and wellbeing needs. This approach focuses on prevention, self-help, and recovery to optimise health and wellbeing.

I recognise that changes to local services are unsettling for people but are necessary in order to deliver long term benefits. Every effort will be made to ensure that a high level of service is maintained as we implement the changes required to achieve our long standing ambition of improving our existing inpatient accommodation which is no longer suitable for providing modern mental health care. Please share this information with your colleagues and if you require further information, this can be arranged by contacting [communications@lancashirecare.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@lancashirecare.nhs.uk)

Yours sincerely



**Professor Heather Tierney-Moore**  
**Chief Executive**