

Our Ref: CB/ejm

16th June, 2016

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Via Email: cllr.jillian.reeves@essex.gov.uk

Councillor Jillian Reeves,
Chairman,
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee,
Essex County Council,
PO Box 11,
County Hall,
Chelmsford CM1 1LX

Dear Cllr Reeves,

Re: Peter Bruff Ward

Thank you for your letter of 3rd June concerning the move of Peter Bruff Ward from Clacton Hospital to the Kings Wood Centre. Please accept my unreserved apology for the delay in this reply.

May I first put this move into the context of changes at the Trust following the results of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) report on the Trust at the beginning of the year. You will recall that their review rated the Trust as 'Requires Improvement'. One of the points raised by the CQC that contributed to this rating was breeches of the NHS single sex/privacy and dignity rules, where Peter Bruff ward was specifically mentioned. Peter Bruff is a 17 bed mixed sex Functional Mental Health Ward treating patients with various complex mental health issues. It is housed in the Clacton Hospital building and rented by the Trust from NHS Property Services. The internal layout of the building, specifically the placing of bathrooms and toilets, means that the ward cannot be fully used and meet the NHS single sex/privacy and dignity rules. These are national requirements which must be complied with.

Consideration of changes to inpatient mental health wards in the north east of the County had been under consideration for some time, in particular the renting of the space in Clacton Hospital while the Trust had other vacant ward space in the Landermere Centre, which is opposite.

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Chairman: Chris Paveley
Interim Chief Executive: Christopher Butler

The space available at the Landermere is too small to accommodate a 17 bed ward for working age adults with mental health problems, however, the space occupied by Bernard Ward at the Kings Wood Centre is large enough and was being underused as a ward for male older adults with mental health problems. The Board of Directors of the Trust, therefore, took the decision to move the existing Bernard Ward to the vacant ward in the Landermere Centre and Peter Bruff Ward to the space that would be vacated in the Kings Wood Centre. Both wards are being fully refurbished as part of the move at a cost of £600,000 which I am sure you appreciate is a major investment in the improvement of inpatient facilities.

This move has the additional advantage of centralising older adult inpatient care at the Landermere Centre, and adult inpatient care in Colchester, reducing the need for specialist staff to travel between sites. It also frees up the space in Clacton Hospital and so reduces rental costs to the Trust. Bernard Ward has already been refurbished in the Landermere and patients transferred and they have settled in well. Work is now progressing on the new Peter Bruff Ward and should be completed next month.

In regard to your specific issues I can give you a categorical assurance that Peter Bruff Ward in its new home will continue to treat and care for the same group of patients in exactly the same way as it does currently. It will not be a 'step up' or 'step down' or 'assessment' centre as is being rumoured currently.

In its new location Peter Bruff Ward will still have a 17 bed capacity but far greater flexibility for male and female beds through the use of a 'swing zone'. This means there will be no need to transfer patients between Colchester and Clacton locations to enable them to be admitted to a specific male or female bed.

Work to the new wards also includes the introduction of assistive technology, a serenity suite, decoration and the development of a dementia friendly garden at Barnard Ward, and a new female lounge, new beverage unit, new dispensing counter, assisted toilets to each pair of bedrooms, a bariatric room and anti-ligature works in Peter Bruff Ward.

My firm view is that overall the changes not only improve the environment for all our patients but give staff more time with patients as they are not traveling between centres and release cash to put back into front line care.

On your last point, there were discussions about changes for some time prior to the final plan being announced. In saying this, I readily acknowledge that any change to established services is a legitimate cause for anxiety on the part of existing service users, their family, carers, and partner agencies. In hindsight, I must say that we should have engaged with local people earlier and explained more fully the reasoning behind the changes.

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I hope I have fully answered all your questions but would be happy to give you any further information should you or the Committee require. I would also add that our Director of Operations, Vince McCabe, and Associate Director of Communications, Martin Cresswell, attended a public meeting called by Mr Tom Wood in Clacton on Tuesday, 14th June and answered questions. A few issues were raised which we are now looking into and we will be replying to Mr Wood.

With my best regards,

Yours sincerely,



Christopher Butler
Interim Chief Executive

- c.c. Sam Hepplewhite, Chief Officer, North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (Lead Commissioner),
Members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Graham Butland, Essex County Council Cabinet Member, Health.
Barbara Herts, Director for Commissioning: Mental Health
Vince McCabe, NEP Director of Operations