

Media information

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Mental health trust transforms services in Stockton

Improvements to mental health services in Stockton mean that older people in the area are able to receive more of their care at home.

The team from Lustrum Vale inpatient unit have changed the way they work to improve patient care and reduce the length of time that older people have to spend in hospital.

Staff on the ward, which is run by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, have speeded up the assessment and treatment processes so that patients are getting the care they need promptly and are able to return home quickly.

As a result of these improvements bed occupancy on the unit has decreased dramatically since the beginning of the year and over the last three months there have been less than five patients from Stockton on the 22 bed ward at any one time.

There is currently only one patient on the unit.

The Board of Directors of the mental health trust have therefore agreed to temporarily close the unit and admit patients to their flagship development in Middlesbrough, Roseberry Park.

Dr Nick Land, Medical Director at the Trust, said: "Our patients and their families tell us that they want to remain independent and at home for as long as possible.

"The staff on the ward have done an amazing job and have transformed the way they work.

"Patients are receiving the care and support they need promptly and are able to return home quickly.

"These improvements have resulted in a huge reduction in bed occupancy rates and we now have a ward that is practically empty.

"We have a duty to use taxpayers' money wisely and we do not think that running an almost empty ward is the best use of our funds."

Stephen Childs, Interim Chief Executive, NHS Stockton-on-Tees, the local Primary Care Trust, said: "NHS Stockton-on-Tees and Tees Esk and Wear Valleys Foundation Trust have a mutual objective to minimise the number of elderly people with mental health needs requiring admission to a hospital bed.

"The mental health trust is making progress with their modernisation of elderly care services in the community and we very much look forward to the evaluation of this particular aspect of their service transformation in the autumn.

"The views of patients, carers and the public are very important to us and we will be working with the mental health trust to ensure that the public are consulted before any final decision is made to close the unit permanently."

The situation will be reviewed in October 2011, or earlier if required. No decision about the future of the unit will be made without a full public consultation.

ENDS

Notes to editor:

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) was formed in April 2006 and was authorised as a foundation trust on 1 July 2008. The trust provides mental health services for the people of County Durham, Tees Valley and parts of North Yorkshire. It also provides a range of learning disability and addictive behaviour services in the area, as well specialist mental health and learning disability services to other parts of northern England.

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