

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Intensive Community Support to benefit patients

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust is introducing Intensive Community Support to enable more people to be cared for at home and spend less time in hospital.

Providing the best possible services for patients is our fundamental goal, and improving the quality of care for older and vulnerable patients is a priority we share with our commissioners and the NHS nationally.

A large proportion of our patients are frail and elderly and many don't want, and with the right support, don't need, to go in to hospital. A recent review of patients on our community hospital wards showed that 52 of 193 patients (27%) could have been cared for at home if an enhanced community service was available. Those patients required more frequent visits or specialist input that with additional resource could have been provided within community teams.

As part of the review we have also asked some of our patients how they feel about their treatment. One 71 year old gentleman who was receiving rehabilitation in a community hospital following an operation in Leicester's Hospitals said: *"I appreciate all that everyone has done for me in this hospital. I have had wonderful care from all the staff, especially the physiotherapist, but I really want to be at home with my wife and continue my physiotherapy there if possible."*

Director of Community Health Services Rachel Bilsborough said: *"We believe that care provided closer to home and, where appropriate, at home, is better for patients. This is also what patients tell us that they want. Local NHS organisations and GPs are working together to improve health services for patients with these commitments in mind."*

"We're investing around £400,000 in our community services to be able to provide an enhanced level of care and we've also secured some transitional funding so that we can reduce the number of beds gradually while we develop the alternative community service. We will only care for patients in their own home when it is safe to do so and they will get the best possible outcome."

The Trust has been working up plans to introduce Intensive Community Support (ICS) to enable as many people as possible to be cared for in their own homes instead of being in hospital.

ICS will not be a new and separate service. We plan to recruit more community staff and review the skills of our existing community teams to be able to provide an increased level of care at home. This might include more frequent nursing and therapy visits, and input from specialist clinicians including geriatricians.

ICS will enable some patients to be discharged from hospital more quickly, and will mean that some don't need to be admitted at all.

We are initially introducing ICS in our west locality – which covers Charnwood, North West Leicestershire and Hinckley and Bosworth.

With more people being cared for at home, less people will need to go into hospital, but community hospital wards will continue to be a vital part of the care pathway for frail older people. We anticipate transferring the care of 48 patients (the equivalent of two wards) from hospital into the community. The transfer will be gradual. As we enhance our community services, we will reduce the number of patients being cared for in the community hospital.

We have considered ward layout, environmental factors and the need for continued delivery of specialised care in the stroke unit, palliative care suites and mental health ward in our west locality, and have identified Ward 3 at Coalville Community Hospital and Gracedieu Ward at Loughborough Hospital as the most suitable wards to reduce bed numbers once the ICS service is established.

Coalville and Loughborough Hospitals both have several wards and the full range of stroke, rehabilitation, palliative care and mental health inpatient services would continue to be available as it is now.

Space will be freed up in the two hospitals but this does not necessarily mean that wards would be closed. The space could in future be used to provide additional services within community hospitals.

Rachel added: "Clearly the change will impact on some of our staff and we are currently consulting with them about the implications. We'll need less hospital staff and more community staff and we're hoping that hospital staff will think about taking up community roles. We started to talk to our staff about ICS several weeks ago and I'm pleased that some hospital staff have already taken the opportunity to spend time with their community colleagues to see if they like it."

NOTES TO EDITORS

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides a range of health and wellbeing services mainly for people living in the city of Leicester and the neighboring counties of Leicestershire and Rutland. The Trust serves a population of one million and has a budget in excess of £250 million and employs almost 6,000 staff. For more information visit www.leicspt.nhs.uk/

Our mission: To advance health and wellbeing for you and your community

Our vision: To become an integrated Foundation Trust with a passion for quality and excellence

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