

Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust – Hydrotherapy Service

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Cabinet Member: Councillor Christine Lawrence

Division and Local Member: N/A

1. Summary

- 1.1. Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust has been awarded £11.524m of STP capital funding to develop an Acute Assessment Hub on the Musgrove Park Site Centralising Acute Assessment Services on the Musgrove Park Hospital Site will require the relocation of the hydrotherapy service.
- 1.2. Relocation on the hospital site is not considered to be either appropriate or feasible. It is proposed that the hydrotherapy service is to be temporarily co-located with the outpatient department physiotherapy service at Dene Barton Community Hospital.
- 1.3. Patients and staff have been asked for their views about the hydrotherapy service and both groups are generally happy if this service is relocated to another pool or new pool in the Taunton Deane area.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1. Scrutiny is asked to consider the temporary relocation of the Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust hydrotherapy service to Dene Barton Community Hospital.

3. Background

- 3.1. Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust has been awarded £11.524m of STP capital funding to develop an Acute Assessment Hub on the Musgrove Park Site. The proposed location for this investment is the hospital based therapies department, this location provides the necessary and closest proximity to the Emergency Department.
- 3.2. The proposed relocation of hydrotherapy services into a community setting has long been anticipated as part of the hospital development plan at Musgrove Park Hospital. This will enable acute and emergency services for the sickest patients to be centralised into one location. This service does not need to be located on an acute hospital site and there are no practicable or affordable options for relocating this service elsewhere on the hospital site.
- 3.3. The current hydrotherapy service is predominantly for patients that are community based - only one inpatient has accessed the service in the last 6 months. The clinical team do not think that this service has to be located on an

acute hospital site. The hydrotherapy pool is used for physiotherapy and rehabilitation for patients who are recovering from injuries or have physical health conditions that would benefit from hydrotherapy. On average 20 patients a week use the pool. The service has changed over recent years with a decreasing number of patients as alternative therapy treatments are becoming increasingly available to patients.

- 3.4.** A temporary relocation of the service to Dene Barton Community Hospital is proposed by the therapies service on the basis of the co-location with the outpatient department physiotherapy service which was temporarily moved to that site in September 2017 and a number of service users already receiving treatment at this site.

A number of alternative relocation options were considered. The new Hazelbrook Campus was considered but this would have significant risks to the sustainability of staffing the service due to being remote from the outpatient physiotherapy department. All providers of private hydrotherapy pools in Somerset have also been contacted and they either do not have appropriate access or availability, or do not hire out to other providers. Other Community Hospital locations would also be remote from the physiotherapy department at Dene Barton Community Hospital and would be at a greater distance from the Taunton catchment population which would not be supported by public feedback.

- 3.5** Work on the new Acute Assessment Hub will not start before June 2020, so alternative provision would need to be arranged from April 2020 to ensure continuity of provision. Any new pool installed at Dene Barton Community Hospital will be transferrable to another location.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1.** A survey was distributed to patients and staff in February 2019 to gather views and opinions of the plans for the pool. A total of 91 responses were submitted. 64 responses were from members of staff. 27 other responses were recorded and were from patients, carers/family members of patients and members of the public.

- 4.2.** The survey findings were as follows:

- The service is highly valued; over half of patients would be happy to travel to an alternative venue, and almost all would be able to do so if necessary.
- The hydrotherapy service is described by patients in very positive terms, as 'amazing' and 'invaluable' and an important part of their rehabilitation.
- Over half of patients (59%) were happy to travel outside of Taunton for an appointment, but 41% would only use a pool in Taunton or Musgrove.
- The majority of both staff and patients (89%) would be able to access the pool at a different venue that was still within ten miles of Musgrove Park (some with some inconvenience or with difficulty).

5. Implications

- 5.1.** 1200 patients per year would no longer receive this service on the Musgrove

Park hospital site and would need to travel to Dene Barton Community Hospital.

The Hydrotherapy pool is considered a beneficial service by staff and patients alike and therefore both groups are keen that this service is not lost.

Relocating this service on the Dene Barton site would ensure that the service is still available for local people and only 5 miles from the current site.

Generally, both staff and patients would be happy with changes to the location of the service, whether this is the use of another pool or a new pool to be built at a different location.

There are understandably some concerns about accessibility and distance of another location considering the patient groups who use this service. However, the majority of patients use the service for short-term rehabilitation and would not therefore have to commit to potentially difficult travel for long-term care or treatment. The Trust would work with patients affected to support them to find alternative travel options. Those who travel by car will be able to take advantage of the free parking and shorter walking distances at the Dene Barton site, which would be seen as positive.

This temporary relocation will be reconsidered at the same point that the current temporary relocation of the outpatient physiotherapy service is reviewed, linked to the Fit for My Future review of community hospitals and community based services.

6. Background papers

6.1. Patient and staff Survey

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author