

**Southampton City Council
Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel
October 2016**

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust: Update on Antelope House

Background

During the HOSP meeting on 30 June 2016, the panel was updated on the reasons for the temporary closure of Hamtun ward at Antelope House in Southampton, as well as plans for recruitment and staff retention. Hamtun ward closed in July 2016 and is anticipated to reopen in March 2017, with the majority of patients being cared for at Huntercombe unit in Roehampton in the meantime.

Having successfully recruited to almost all posts in the spring of 2015, Antelope House has struggled to maintain and fill all nursing vacancies, for a number of reasons. The number of substantive nursing staff in post was less than 50% of the overall staffing numbers required for the unit, which made the unit unsafe to run.

The decision was taken to close the ward for a defined period of time in order to ensure safe staffing levels on all other units at Antelope House, and being able to focus resources on developing a sustainable staff recruitment and retention strategy.

There are a number of reasons why Antelope House has struggled to fill and maintain all nursing posts:

- There is a national shortage of nurses and fewer nurses are entering training. This is a short and long term challenge for the whole NHS.
- Improvements are needed to the shape of the workforce in our acute mental health services, so patients are supported by the right staff at the right time.
- A recent redesign of mental health services in Southampton created new opportunities for staff in different teams.
- Antelope House is a very busy hospital supporting some of the most unwell people, so it is a very demanding job. With staff shortages this becomes even more difficult and can affect the wellbeing and resilience of our staff.

Recent activity

Staff retention

As part of our skill mix review we have enhanced our career pathways from band 2 to band 7 posts. We anticipate this will be attractive to both health care support workers and qualified nurses and support retaining staff.

Staff have helped to develop the new staffing model, the job descriptions and the career pathways; and at a recent inspection the CQC commented positively on it and encouraged us to share it more widely. We have started to share the work in Southampton with our other inpatient units so they can begin developing a similar model.

We have been holding staff drop-in sessions at Antelope House, which has assisted with ensuring we fully engage our workforce in future developments ensuring their ideas and initiatives are central to the way forward.

Recruitment

We have undertaken a substantial amount of work in developing our recruitment material to include a focus on the service user experience, with service users describing their experience and how staff have contributed to their recovery, and staff focusing on how satisfying and fulfilling this makes our work.

Based on this, we have created our first film about working at Antelope House and in mental health, which is set to air this month. There are two further films planned – one about people's experience of using our service and the other about our new model and our work with students.

We have started our social media campaign to encourage more people to work at Antelope House and are currently developing more adverts to enable us to launch a new one each month. The adverts include pictures of the team and quotes about working here.

We have also started our new local recruitment panel process (monthly panels aimed at streamlining the process) and have recruited one nurse from Scotland. Based on this we are targeting some adverts in local and regional Scottish papers and developing links with their universities. We have employed a workforce administrator to do much of the administration associated with recruitment with the intention of freeing up nursing time.

Management of the current situation

We have been working to develop our relationship with Huntercombe unit in Roehampton. Our aim is to support good quality of care and treatment as well as the safe and effective transition of patients between our services.

We visit Huntercombe every other week to meet with service users and carers as well as having a presence in the ward review with the team and service user. In addition, we are holding weekly clinical meetings and receive daily updates on patient care. We financially support carers to visit their loved ones and receive regular information about incidents and restrictive practice so we can ensure the quality of care is of a standard we expect.

Contact

We recognise that this situation is not ideal and want to do what is best for our service users, their carers and our staff to improve people's experience when using our services. Should you wish to discuss this situation, your concerns and any ideas you have please contact:

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