



Information Bulletin

Service Changes and Action to Prevent Redundancies

The Trust is mid-way through a major modernisation of its mental health services, which involves staff in substantial changes to the way they work, and for many people, changes in where they work. There is also considerable concern about the potential for redundancies. Unison members have exercised their right to vote to take industrial action, and have voted in favour of taking action. The Trust believes that the most productive way forward is to continue discussion about how to minimise or prevent any potential redundancies, and will be continuing to hold talks with Unison.

The service changes that are taking place involve moving acute inpatient services onto single sites, and developing community services into specialist teams. In the case of adults of working age, this has involved moving acute inpatient services from two sites to one, and for older adults is likely to involve moving from four sites to one.

The Trust is introducing these changes both to improve services, and to make significant financial savings.

What are the benefits to patients of making these changes?

In the case of acute inpatient services, there are significant clinical benefits from being on one site. In older adult services, this means that we can get a more effective separation of services for people with very different problems for example, people with dementia and depression are currently cared for on the same wards in some areas. Being on one site also means that we will be able to provide safer services with 24-hour emergency teams to support the wards and better medical cover.

In community services, the developments mean that our clinical teams will be organised in line with national standards, with the structure of the new teams helping to enable people to receive support and treatment in the community rather than in hospital.

Cost Savings

The Trust also needs to make substantial savings. This year, the Trust has had to make £9.6 million of savings, £8.3 million of which has to be year on year savings, and £1.3 million is one-off savings. The cause of the financial deficit has been growing cost pressures over the years, requirements on the Trust to make efficiency

savings, and requirements to make a financial contribution to reduce the financial shortfall in the wider NHS.

Because of the changes being implemented, the Trust expects by the end of the financial year to have reduced the £8.3 million ongoing deficit to about £1.4 million, a reduction of £6 million. Next year, we expect the remaining deficit to be removed by our remaining savings plans, including the completion of the acute inpatient changes in older adult mental health services. The Trust will still be in deficit in the short term because of the one-off costs of making the changes, but we will be in a position where the Trust's costs match its income and where our costs are closer to national averages.

Will there be redundancies?

What is the Trust doing to prevent redundancies?

The Trust aims to redeploy all staff affected by the service changes. In order to do this, the Trust has been keeping staff vacancies free since April 2006. This will enable us to provide nearly all staff with jobs.

The Trust is also planning other measures such as retaining staff until suitable vacancies arise. We are also planning how training could be used to assist people to develop their skills to work in other jobs.

The Trust has also arranged, with the help of Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust, for displaced staff to be prioritised over external applicants when applying for vacancies in these organisations.

Overall, the Trust is confident that there will be more vacancies than people requiring to be placed into these vacancies. However, it will be difficult to place a minority of people into jobs because of where people live in relation to the location of vacancies, and some people will have limited ability to travel.

As a consequence of all these measures, the Trust expects redundancies to be kept to a minimum. We have always been cautious about attempting to put precise numbers on potential redundancies because this depends upon a large number of factors which are very hard to predict. These factors include:

- The date when changes are made - remembering that current changes to older adult inpatient services are being delayed by referral to the Secretary of State by the Gloucestershire County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- The number of vacancies available at the time the changes take place
- The match between where staff in different types of job are living and where the vacancies occur
- The preferences of individual staff and their ability to travel

We have, however, modelled the potential number of redundancies that could occur, making a number of assumptions and we have discussed these estimates with staff-side representatives. The predictions result in an estimate of redundancies for 25 WTE staff. However, there could be no redundancies at all depending on how willing and able some staff are to travel to jobs in other parts of the county. We are

committed to sitting down with each affected member of staff to discuss what is best for them in their individual circumstances.

Supporting Staff

The Trust guarantees that it will work extremely hard to minimise redundancies and will work closely with the Trade Unions to achieve this.

The Trust Board recognises how difficult a time it is for staff in the organisation that are faced with uncertainty about what their job will be, who their colleagues will be, and even whether they will secure a job.

The Trust wishes to support staff through this difficult time as much as we can, by offering opportunities for one-to-one support and advice, and help in how to apply for jobs within the Trust.

Will patient and staff safety be maintained during any industrial action?

The Trust has been developing contingency plans to ensure that in the event of industrial action, patient and staff safety is maintained and that disruption to services is minimised. The Trust will be sharing these plans with Trade Unions, and we are pleased that the Trade Unions have given assurances that any strike action will not jeopardise patient safety.

How will I find out more information?

The Trust will issue press releases and updates, and will keep updates on the Trust's web-site. Colleagues in partner organisations will also be briefed through updates in normal meetings.

For further information, please contact myself in the first instance, or:

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