

Update Paper Phlebotomy Services – Closure of Princess House – Next steps

Situation

- SaTH ceased to provide a phlebotomy service from Princess House in April 2018 and an additional clinic room in Elizabeth House (EH) RSH was created to support service relocation.
- The relocation of this service away from the town centre was unpopular with some patients and in May 2018 Simon Wright CEO asked Pathology to investigate options for an alternative community location and to engage with the public to establish their views on their preferred location for the future provision of phlebotomy services.
- Two rounds of patient engagement surveys have been undertaken since May 2018; we received 530 responses from the first round of engagement and 422 responses from the 2nd round of engagement; survey results were inconclusive and gave no clear mandate from patients on where they would like to access services in future. (97% of patients who used the service at EH have rated the service as Good).
- Alternative town centre locations have been explored; indicative development costs range between £8K - £204K and rental charges (including rates) between £31K and £36.5K. SaTH are unable to absorb these cost pressures.
- Riverside and Claremont Bank GP practice managers have confirmed they do not have space in their current surgeries to house a phlebotomy clinic and are unable to assist with the costs of renting an alternative space in the town centre. Riverside GP practice has indicated there may be able to accommodate a clinic when their new premises become available in September 2019 and are willing to explore the feasibility of housing a service for Claremont Bank GP patients from their new premises, but are unable to confirm until early 2019.
- Demand from primary care for access to drop-in phlebotomy services continues to grow 121,783 patients were seen in our OP phlebotomy clinics during FY17/18 and we predict that we will see 148,046 patients in our OP phlebotomy clinics by the end of this financial year.

Background

- SaTH has for many of years supported phlebotomy clinics at community locations across Shropshire and T&W; providing a service in **some** GP Practices, at Whitchurch Hospital and prior to its closure, Princess House, Shrewsbury town Centre.
- Two years prior to the closure of Princess House, the CHT started invoicing SaTH for space being used by SaTH staff to provide the phlebotomy service at a cost of £8K/Q. The Trust disputed the charges in 2015/16 and attempts were made by the CHT to find alternative locations for the service in the community.
- In discussions with SaTH Contracts & Performance team, Shropshire CCG was unwilling to support the cost of maintaining the Princess House service because it was only available to certain Shropshire patients and therefore raised questions of inequality within the county. In T&W, several GP practices host a phlebotomy clinic and there is a walk- in service at PRH. There is no other community service in T&W comparable with that provided at Princess House.
- SaTH ceased to provide a phlebotomy service from Princess House in April 2018, as the Trust was not in a position to absorb a cost pressure of £32K per annum charged by the Community Health Trust (CHT).
- Phlebotomy Services across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are variable in terms of how they are provisioned.

Assessment

- Results of the patient surveys provide no clear mandate as to where patients want to access phlebotomy services in future. Therefore, there is no compelling narrative to change current arrangements.
- Various alternative town centre locations have been explored; the most cost efficient solution would result in an indicative cost pressure of £40K in year 1 and £31.5K for each subsequent year. SaTH are unable to absorb these cost pressures.
- Riverside GP practice new premises may be able to accommodate a phlebotomy service from September 2019 and the practice is willing to explore the feasibility of housing a service on behalf of Claremont Bank patients. Therefore it does not seem prudent to spend circa £40K at this time.
- There is disparity in how phlebotomy service across the county is provisioned, which is not fair and equitable.
- Contractual obligations are unclear and legacy arrangements exist which require review.
- Demand for the service, is increasing rapidly and is not sustainable in the long term. A full capacity and demand exercise is required.

Recommendation

- The most appropriate course of action would be for SaTH to have deeper and meaningful discussion with Commissioners and CCG colleagues to review phlebotomy service provision across the county.

Helen Harvey
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23/11/2018