



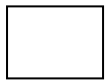
Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Health)

Date: 16 March 2010

Subject: Provision of Dermatology Services – update

Electoral Wards Affected:



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Scrutiny Board (Health) with an updated position regarding the proposed development of dermatology services within Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTHT).

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 24 November 2009, the Board received and considered a range of information associated with proposed changes to dermatology services, particularly in terms of in-patient provision on ward 43 at Leeds General Infirmary (LGI). The Board was made aware of patient's concerns and anxieties around proposed changes to the dermatology service and the need to maintain a dedicated in-patient service for those patients suffering acute episodes that required hospital admission. Members also heard that patients and the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD) had significant concerns around the consultation process – highlighting that staff and patients needed to be engaged and consulted before any decision to changes the services currently provided on ward 43.
- 2.2 At the same meeting in November 2009, representatives from LTHT explained that ward 43 had 14 beds – 4 of which were allocated for rheumatology patients. As part of the broader changes associated with the Clinical Services Reconfiguration (CSR), it had always been proposed to move the rheumatology beds to St James's University Hospital (SJUH). Coupled with the fact that, in the future, the current ward would become isolated with no out of hours medical cover, it was considered that the dermatology ward was unsustainable as a 10 bed unit.

2.3 Members were advised that consideration was being given to re-providing dermatology services elsewhere within the Trust and an options appraisal was being undertaken. Members were assured by LTHT that there had always been an intention to engage and consult with staff and patients, and that further work around engaging and involving key stakeholders would be undertaken in an open and transparent manner.

2.4 Following consideration of the issues presented and discussed at the meeting, the Scrutiny Board raised the following concerns and agreed these should be communicated to LTHT's Chief Executive:

- The Scrutiny Board is not averse to changes in services but an emerging theme for the year to date, seemed to be around how changes are proposed and progressed.
- The Scrutiny Board is concerned that the Chief Executive of LTHT had already indicated that ward 43 was not suitable as a ward and would be turned into office space. Despite the assurances given at the meeting, it seemed that a decision had already been taken to move services from Ward 43.
- The Scrutiny Board is again concerned about the lack of consultation by LTHT with key stakeholders and that the Trust did not seem to have a strategy or procedure for consultation.
- Variations to services need to be looked at in terms of the potential impact on service users and clinical need – not just in terms of the level of expenditure: The Scrutiny Board believes that the changes represented a substantial variation in service and as such should be the subject of a 12 week period of consultation, in which the Scrutiny Board should be included.
- The Scrutiny Board agreed that this issue should come back to the Scrutiny Board to ensure that the commitments given by LTHT regarding the consultation process were taking place.

2.5 These matters were brought to the attention of LTHT's Chief Executive by way of a letter from the Chair of the Board on 12 January 2010. A response from LTHT was subsequently issued on 26 January 2010 and is summarised below:

- LTHT has no intention to discontinue providing dedicated Dermatology inpatient beds, the continued need for these beds and the need for skilled nursing staff is recognised. LTHT is seeking to re-provide the inpatient beds to another Ward location within the Trust.
- A recognition that the Scrutiny Board is not adverse to changes in services and the need for LTHT to improve its communication with the Scrutiny Board regarding how changes are proposed, discussed and progressed. LTHT is committed to this improvement in communication and the agreed reintroduction of the health proposals working group, should be a fundamental part of this process.
- At the meeting on 23 November 2009, where the Scrutiny Board visited LGI, an indication of the broad direction of travel for LTHT was given in relation to the Clinical Services Reconfiguration Programme and to the potential impact this will have on the future use of estate within LTHT. Comments made during that discussion did not mean that any definitive decision had been made regarding the future location of the Dermatology inpatient beds.

- LTHT had already indicated its intention to look at the options to re-provide the Dermatology inpatient beds on another ward within the Trust: However, no definitive plan had yet been made regarding the location of these inpatient beds.
- In relation to consultation with key stakeholders, LTHT is keen to work with patients, service users and staff on any proposed changes to service. It is unfortunate and regrettable that the proposal to re-provide the Dermatology inpatient beds resulted in such initial concern amongst patients and staff. While this was never intended there are learning points regarding how initial communication of such matters are handled in the future. However, more formal engagement with and involvement of patients has now been established. A patient panel has been set up and has so far met on two occasions. The establishment of the patient panel enables more effective and comprehensive communication to be developed and maintained between LTHT and the Dermatology patient groups.
- There is no proposal to change the level of service or support provided to this patient population, and LTHT has indicated that it is seeking to re-provide the Dermatology inpatient beds to another ward within the Trust. LTHT is working with patients and staff on the production of an options paper regarding the relocation of these inpatient beds – aiming to have this completed by the end of February 2010. Until the option paper is finalised and a preferred way forward is determined, LTHT does not agree that a significant variation to service is indicated.
- A clinical set of criteria has also been produced, led by the Dermatology Consultants which will be used as the basis for determining and assessing the future options for the Dermatology inpatient beds. A lead individual (Matron) has been identified within the Trust to work with the patient panel and the Dermatology team on the production of the options paper regarding the future location of the Dermatology inpatient beds.

3.0 Dermatology Services – proposed changes

- 3.1 At its meeting on 24 November 2009, the Board agreed to monitor progress with regard to the proposed changes to dermatology services and reconsider the issues raised at a future meeting.
- 3.2 In this regard, representatives from LTHT and the newly established patient panel (Leeds Dermatology Patients Panel (LDPP)) have been invited to attend the meeting to provide an update for the Board. Representatives from NHS Leeds, as the service commissioner, will also be in attendance.
- 3.3 At the time of writing this report, no formal written submissions had been received, however such information may be provided at the meeting

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 Members of Scrutiny Board are asked to consider the information presented in this report and discussed at the meeting, and determine any:
 - 4.1.1 Specific action the Board may wish to take;
 - 4.1.2 Recommendations the Board may wish to make;

4.1.3 Matters that require further scrutiny.

5.0 Background Papers

- Provision of Dermatology Services – Scrutiny Board (Health), 24 November 2009
- Dermatology Services (Ward 43) – letter to LTHT (12 January 2010)
- Dermatology Services (Ward 43) – letter from LTHT (26 January 2010)