

## **Progress Report: Devon Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **St John's Court, Exmouth**

#### **Background**

Devon Partnership NHS Trust is making some transformational changes over the next few years to ensure that it can continue to provide high quality services to people with mental health and learning disability needs and remain financially viable.

A key area of the programme is to make better use of the Trust's estate. The organisation currently operates out of around 60 buildings across Devon and spends around 10% of its annual budget (around £12m) on estates and their upkeep. Many of these buildings are old, under-used and/or unfit for purpose.

One of the main proposals under SMART Recovery is to operate three major clinical hubs across the county (Exeter, Torbay and Barnstaple) supported by a network of satellite sites. The first hub, in Torbay, opened in January 2016 and is working well. The Exeter hub will be located at Wonford House, serving Exeter, East and Mid Devon. One of the key benefits of this approach is that full, multidisciplinary assessments can take place in an environment that brings together the full range of clinical disciplines – including doctors, nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists and many others. This model mirrors that which exists in physical health services, where some services are available locally, but most specialist services are concentrated in larger acute general hospitals.

As well as the clinical benefit, co-locating core services on a smaller number of hub sites also brings important efficiency gains. Although the Trust currently has a balanced financial position, it has to achieve significant annual savings targets. The Trust is striving to protect frontline services and jobs by making sure that its investment in bricks and mortar is no more than is absolutely necessary.

The clinic hub approach does mean that some of the current work, notably people's initial assessment following their referral, will be transferred from areas such as Exmouth and Honiton (where it is currently conducted) into Wonford House. However, much of their care will still remain local, meaning that people will still be supported in their own homes or a more local satellite clinic, as they are now.

The Trust has conducted a full quality and equality impact assessment. This concluded that the Trust could consider selling some of its estate, including St John's Court in Exmouth, with a plan to relocate to more affordable premises in the town. The Trust is exploring a range of alternative locations, including co-location with other health and social care providers and voluntary organisations.

St John's Court is currently the base for around 55 staff working in a number of different teams. The Trust readily acknowledges that it is a lovely site that is highly valued by people who use services and staff – but a significant proportion of it is not utilised.

The Trust has made it clear that it will not make any decision about the future of the site until suitable alternative accommodation is found in the town. It has made it equally clear appropriate arrangements will be made for people who are unable to travel to Wonford House for their assessment or other treatment.

The majority of people supported by the Trust's teams in Exmouth are not seen at St Johns Court but seen at another setting or in their own homes. The site's estimated operating costs are £150k per year and a capital receipt from the sale of the building would generate an estimated sum of £600-800k. The Trust is confident that far less expensive premises from which to deliver services could be secured in the town.

### **Latest position**

It remains the Trust's intention to sell the site, use the proceeds from the sale to develop other capital projects and significantly reduce its annual operating costs by moving to more affordable premises in Exmouth. The Trust continues to reiterate that there is no intention to reduce the quality or accessibility of mental health services in and around Exmouth.

The Success Regime for Devon, of which DPT is an active member, has brought additional focus to the need for the organisation to contribute to the financial recovery of the whole health and care system across the county.

The St John's Court Community Engagement Meeting has continued to take place regularly to provide members of the campaign group, staff and service users with an update on progress and to listen to suggestions, queries and concerns. This group now includes Cllr Eileen Wragg as well as representatives from Exmouth Town Council. It last met in January 2016 (meeting notes attached) and will meet again in April. Dr David Somerfield will be attending the next meeting to talk about the new model of care in detail – including the Single Point of Access, enhanced process of assessment, progress with clinical hubs and development of clear pathways of care for people.

The main issue to emerge at the latest meeting was the possibility of relocating some of the services currently located at St John's Court to Exmouth Hospital – and the Trust has confirmed that it is exploring this option.

In terms of the sale of the building, the Trust has not yet actively promoted the site and there are no prospective purchasers on the near horizon.

To date, only one wider public engagement meeting has taken place (in July 2015) but the Trust has made it clear that it intends to hold further engagement with people in the town in due course.

Devon Partnership NHS Trust