

<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Wiltshire Mental Health Services for Older People – Charter House, Trowbridge</b>
<b>Date of Report:</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> February 2013</b>
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### **Purpose of report**

1. To provide a briefing for elected members on the intentions of the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) to close, on a temporary basis, the specialist mental health in-patient unit at Charter House, Trowbridge.

### **Background information**

2. Commissioned by NHS Wiltshire, AWP provide a range of specialist mental health services across Wiltshire for older people and included within this is Charter House, a 24-bedded specialist inpatient assessment unit for older people with organic mental health problems, including dementia.

### **Main considerations**

3. In January 2013 Wiltshire Council was informed by AWP that it had taken the decision to stop admitting patients to Charter House on a temporary basis due to a number of issues including low occupancy, environmental problems and the stand alone nature of the site. On 25<sup>th</sup> January AWP issued a statement explaining their plans to stakeholders which can be seen in Appendix 1.
4. Further to this AWP has stated that the timing of the decision to suspend placements is based upon several factors coming together (indicated in the original statement) and the increased focus within the Trust on ensuring that all their services are consistently of a high quality. A drop in the number of inpatient admissions has added to the ability to deliver a viable service. In addition, the structure of the building is not conducive to delivering services for people with dementia in that it provides limited observation, a lack of 'meaningful wandering space' and inadequate quiet spaces for therapies. These have been issues for some time and the combination of this and problems with the building structure such as problems with flooring, damp, odours, leakages - none of which can be easily fixed. AWP state that these issues are exacerbated by recruitment problems which mean that they are unable to provide consistent care with a team of staff who know the patients and can plan the care required. They therefore have taken the decision to close on a temporary basis.
5. It is understood that there are currently four individuals receiving a service at Charter House, two of which are ready for discharge and Wiltshire Council is currently sourcing care for these individuals, as they have responsibilities for doing so under normal discharge processes. AWP has stated that work will

take place to safely and sensitively move the remaining two individuals to appropriate accommodation as near to their families as possible.

6. During the period of temporary closure, individuals requiring an assessment bed will be accommodated in Salisbury or Bath (and possibly Swindon). There are no other changes in services to Trowbridge residents. AWP have stated that it is their aim to admit people into assessment wards as a last resort. Most assessments are now conducted in the community or in care home settings. Where admission is required, this period is kept as short as possible, with the aim to move the individual back into accommodation in the community as soon as possible. There should therefore be minimal disruption to patients.
7. Whilst some discussions about the potential future of Charter House had been discussed with Wiltshire Council prior to this announcement, it should be noted that the decision taken to cease admissions on a temporary basis at Charter House was taken by AWP. It was not a decision of Wiltshire Council , or NHS Wiltshire.
8. AWP have stated that there are real issues surrounding the delivery of a quality inpatient service in Charter House, as earlier detailed, which is the basis upon which they took the decision to temporarily cease admissions. However, they also note that no final decision about the future of Charter House will be made until after a review designed to look at the whole model of care provision for people with dementia in Wiltshire has been completed. It is anticipated that the review will include a three month consultation period to consider options for the future provision of specialist mental health services for people with dementia.
9. The review will look at how specialist mental health services for people with dementia are structured to meet the current and future needs of Wiltshire, including community based services, as well as in-patient assessment units. AWP state that the demand for in patient dementia beds is falling in Wiltshire, as it is elsewhere, due to more care being provided in the community, both at home and in care homes. Beds are also occupied for shorter periods of time as AWP see, treat and move people to the most appropriate care location more swiftly. Traditionally more beds have been provided in Wiltshire per head of population which obviously has impacted on investment in community services. AWP believe that the review will hopefully reach a consensus as to the most effective way of spending funds on dementia services in Wiltshire. It is anticipated that this review will be led by the Wiltshire CCG as the commissioner, and AWP, as the provider, and Wiltshire Council will be invited to be involved in this as a key strategic partner in supporting older people within Wiltshire.
10. Ideally AWP would have wished to undertake the review prior to any decision to temporarily close, but because of the combination of factors, previously described, they did not think they would be able to provide a viable and quality service within Charter house in its current design and physical state of the building.
11. AWP have noted that they are keen to complete the review as soon as possible so that they can fully focus on providing the best dementia support possible. In the meantime, the community mental health service serving

Trowbridge and West Wiltshire continues to operate from Charter House and AWP are also looking to extend this to provide more memory clinics and to increase the support groups for people with functional problems. They note that they are able to continue to provide some services from Charter House as there is a difference between the requirements of a 24/7 inpatient unit and those of a community service. Although based in the same building, community staff work from the office accommodation and AWP believe that they can use the space currently used for outpatient clinics more frequently and more effectively. They state that they have already undertaken a range of improvement works to Charter House over a period of time and that any future work will be undertaken in the context of the future use of the building.

## **Conclusion**

12. The decision to suspend admissions to Charter House on a temporary basis has been taken by AWP due to a number of issues, including environmental problems affecting the quality of care provision. AWP have stated that this suspension will remain in place, until a review of specialist mental health services has been undertaken which will determine the future model of services. In terms of moving forwards, Wiltshire Council needs to indicate to AWP and Wiltshire CCG when they will be able to participate in the review, which will then determine the timeframes of the future decisions.

Wiltshire Council will request that they are kept informed and involved, as appropriate, in the plans relating to Charter House.

13. From an operational perspective, Wiltshire Council is working to ensure that for those individuals ready, discharge plans are implemented as soon as possible.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Charter House Statement: 25 January 2013 Issued by AWP**

“Delivering consistently high quality care to dementia patients in Charter House, Trowbridge is proving increasingly difficult as a result of low occupancy, environmental problems and the stand alone nature of the site.

Following preliminary discussions between AWP, NHS Wilts and the CCG, AWP has decided to temporarily stop admitting patients to the unit during the current joint review of all care provided to older people across the county – particularly those with dementia.

However, there is a commitment for AWP to ensure services continue to be provided within West Wiltshire, and Charter House will continue to provide the team base serving the population of Trowbridge and West Wiltshire, as well as providing the out-patient clinics currently held there.

There is also a plan to utilise the space and provide some additional memory service clinics as part of a joint project with NHS Wiltshire to implement a new service model

for memory services which will reduce the waiting times for assessment and treatment in line with national targets, and the Prime Minister's dementia challenge

As these issues are considered, we will keep all our partners, including Wiltshire County Council, fully briefed and will fully engage with them in any decisions about the future of Charter House.

Over the coming weeks, the existing service users on the unit will continue to be moved safely and sensitively to appropriate accommodation as near to their families as possible. This will be discussed fully with families and carers. After these patients have been safely transferred, staff will be temporarily redeployed to other trust facilities and services.

AWP is committed to working closely with health and social care partners to deliver the best quality services for the people of Wiltshire.”