

Mental Health Step-Down Accommodation Review

1. Introduction

1.1 Norfolk Lodge is an 11 bedded mental health 'step-down hostel' for Merton residents with mental health needs. Its primary focus as a step-down facility is the short-term treatment and recovery of patients who have passed through their acute phase of inpatient treatment at Springfield Hospital, but still require 24/7 health treatment for a period of up to 12 weeks, before moving to more independent accommodation.

1.2 Norfolk Lodge is commissioned by Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (MCCG), and has operated in its current site in Norfolk Rd., Collier's Wood since 1998. The service is provided through South West London & St. George's Mental Health Trust (SWLSTG), and the building itself is leased from a private landlord.

1.3 The service first opened as an alternative to the 'long-stay ward' model that was being phased out in mental health to be replaced by less institutionalised and more community based models. For many years, Norfolk Lodge operated as a rehabilitation hostel with a wide remit, supporting people with long-term and short-term needs; male and female; and accepting referrals from both community and inpatient settings.

1.4 Whilst the breadth of this model offered an inclusive approach, it has proved challenging to meet this diversity of needs in such a small facility, and this has seen the service move to its current specific focus. Particular milestones in this regard included:

- In 2007, Norfolk Lodge could no longer meet NHS gender segregation criteria, and became a male only facility. The service had always had a male bias, with only 1-2 females being treated at any one time – alternative spot-purchasing placements have been in place over the last 8 years to meet this need.
- In 2014, the service became commissioned specifically as a 12 week step down service in order to focus on this specific client group, and thus enable a more defined discharge pathway from acute admission wards. This was accompanied with a commitment from MCCG to meet the needs of those people with longer term 24/7 rehabilitation needs, if

necessary by spot-purchasing individual placements bespoke to people's needs.

- 1.5 As part of the spectrum of supported accommodation for people with mental health needs in Merton, the service has been referenced in two recent reviews:

'The spectrum of accommodation in Merton, from high to low dependent and independent accommodation for people with mental health needs should be reviewed, in order to establish current needs, to enable forward planning for the future provision of housing and support options for people with mental health needs'.

Adult Mental Health Needs Assessment 2013-14, Public Health Merton

'Partners in Merton need to prepare and examine business cases...for a replacement service for Norfolk Lodge. It would need to provide short-term step down support from Hospital as described in Annex 4. It needs to cater for male and female residents and it needs to have capacity for 5 or 6 people'.

Merton Mental Health Housing Support and Accommodation Review (draft)
2015, London Borough of Merton

- 1.6 The latter review scoped service models operating elsewhere, as an opportunity to learn and import best practice into Merton, and representatives from MCCG, SWLSTG and the Council (LBM) visited a number of services operating in London in February, 2015. These models involved partnerships between the NHS, providing clinical in-reach; and established housing providers who provide the 24/7 support and treatment for residents. It was clear from these visits that there was significant potential to remodel the step-down provision for Merton residents in a manner which could improve patient outcomes, and provide cost efficiencies that could be reinvested into patient care.
- 1.7 From this, MCCG have asked SWLSTG to review the existing step-down model and to develop a partnership with the right supported housing provider to bring this innovation and service improvement into Merton. This is consistent with the SWLSTG strategy, in working in partnership with third sector partners to provide step down/supported housing, rather than directly providing this through the Trust.
- 1.8 Thus, any re-modelling of step down provision in Merton needs to be seen in the context of improving the service model rather than closing/reducing

existing provision, and that the outcome will be an improved service delivered from an in-borough location.

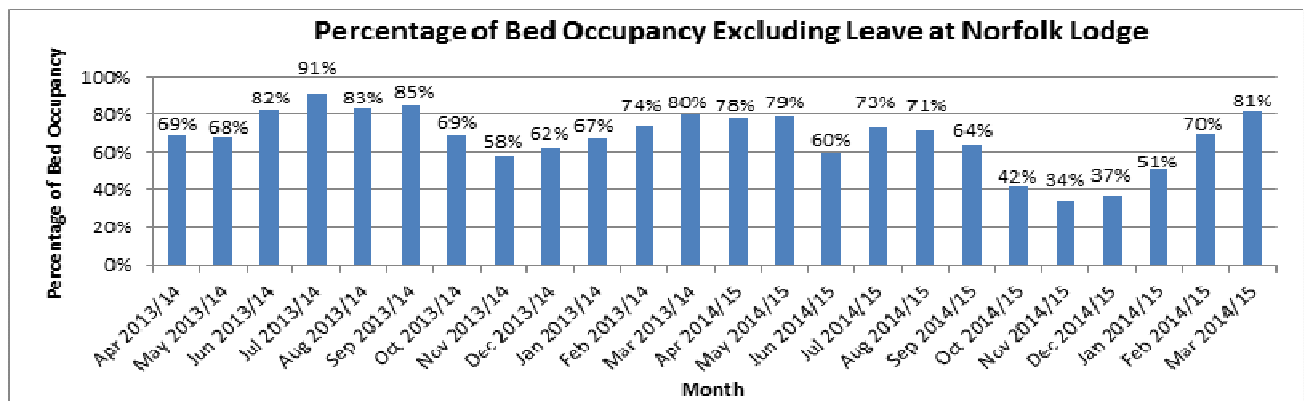
1.9 Both the Adult Mental Health Needs Assessment and the Merton Mental Health Housing Support and Accommodation Review have recommended more work to review mental health supported accommodation, therefore any re-modelling will also need to be seen within this context. This review of step down accommodation is the first step in that process, but agreement has been reached with LBM officers that the plans do align with the wider review of supported accommodation that will follow.

2. Norfolk Lodge – Existing provision

2.1 Norfolk Lodge is an 11 bedded converted house in Norfolk Rd, Colliers Wood, that has operated as a rehabilitation/step down hostel since 1998. The building has not had any significant refurbishment since then. It does not have en-suite bathrooms, and this was a major factor in it falling below the NHS gender segregation criteria and no longer being able to support females since 2007.

2.2 Other facilities such as kitchens or bathrooms are dated and in need of significant capital refurbishment, which is prohibitive for SWLSTG within the lease terms.

2.3 Figure 1 demonstrates the usage of the service:



As an 11 bedded facility, the usage has varied from 4-10 beds/month usage over the last two years, and since its focus became a 12 week step-down facility in 2014, from 4-8. This also relates to admission rates which average 4-5 per month. We believe that there is room to improve the community outreach and discharge planning from the service, and thus plan for a 6-7 bedded step-down service in the future.

2.4 SWLSTG lease the property on a 10 year lease from a private landlord. The lease runs from 2010-2020, with one break clause (with requirement for 6 months' notice) in September, 2015. In order to ensure best value for taxpayers' money, SWLSTG, in consultation with MCCG, needed to make the decision whether to give notice through the break clause in March 15. Given the poor state of the physical environment, and the wider context (see paras. 1.4-1.8), both organisations felt that it was prudent to issue notice and to plan for an alternative service to be provided. The service will therefore stop being provided from Norfolk Lodge in September, 2015. The alternative to issuing notice would have been to commit to the remaining 5 years of the lease at Norfolk Lodge, which would have considerably reduced the scope for improvement of the service model or environment.

2.5 MCCG has pledged to maintain the existing level of investment in mental health services as is currently invested with Norfolk Lodge. This will enable SWLSTG to develop the right partnership with a housing provider, and if efficiencies are released MCCG will reinvest these back into other mental health services in the community. The work is progressing through a market warming event for potential providers in July, which will be followed by more detailed discussions against a specification to agree the best provider. From an analysis of need, and discussions to date the service user/carer representatives and clinicians, the specification of the new service will include:

- 24/7 step/down provision in high quality accommodation.
- An increased emphasis of outreaching into community (employment, shopping, structured activities, accommodation) to support service users to make the next step in their recovery.
- An increased emphasis on peer support and drop-in functions.
- A clinical in reach service provided by SWLSTG.
- Overall pathway management operated by SWLSTG.

2.6 Both MCCG and SWLSTG acknowledge that engagement with key stakeholders should have taken place before the decision was made not to extend the lease, and apologize for this. Service user and carer representatives have been involved in subsequent discussions:

- Workshop with service users, carers and clinicians (14.4.15)
- Presentation to SWLSTG S&M Carer Reference Group (2.6.15)
- Presentation to Trust Acute Care Forum (15.5.15)

These discussions and those with Trust staff have informed the draft specification of the new service outlined in para. 2.5.

SWLSTG and MCCG are also working with Healthwatch to plan a workshop with key stakeholders in July – date to be confirmed at time of writing.

2.7 MCCG and SWLSTG acknowledge that such change must have active input from key stakeholders and met with service user and carer representatives on 15.6.15 to discuss how this may be best progressed. Key initiatives in this regard included a commitment to:

- a fortnightly planning group that would ensure that service user and carer representatives would be involved in the agreement of the service specification of the new service and in related key decision-making processes.
- Service user/carer involvement in market warming event for potential providers.
- A Healthwatch sponsored event to engage a wide range of service users, carers and wider public on proposals being developed.
- Service user and carer involvement in choosing the housing provider.
- Monitoring the impact of both the interim and longer term changes through tracking of key performance indicators (e.g readmissions to acute beds within 30 days of discharge, Delayed Transfers of Care) relating to this part of the pathway.

2.8 The existing service will cease operating from Norfolk Lodge in September, and the housing partner chosen will consider a range of properties from where to deliver the future service. It remains a possibility within this that the new provider could provide the service from a refurbished Norfolk Lodge.

2.9 Whilst MCCG and SWLSTG agree on this as the direction of travel, both organisations acknowledge that it will not be possible to implement this level of service transformation by September when Norfolk Lodge closes. Discussions are progressing with a selection of existing local providers who could provide bespoke individualised placements during the interim period of Norfolk Lodge closing and the new model commencing. This interim period is likely to be 6 months depending on discussions with potential providers.

2.10

2.11 SWLSTG and MCCG both commit to service users being supported at the right level according to their needs, both through any interim period and when the substantive model becomes operational, and this will be monitored through the key performance indicators referenced in para 2.7.

2.12 Norfolk Lodge staff would be redeployed within existing vacancies across SWLStG as a result of this.

3. Summary

- 3.1 Norfolk Lodge has operated as a rehabilitation/step down hostel for Merton residents for 17 years, and both the building and service model are in need of renewal. This has been highlighted in two recent reports which call for a review of the model within a wider review of supported accommodation for people with mental health needs in Merton.
- 3.2 Given this context, SWLSTG in agreement with MCCG, have issued notice on the break clause on the existing lease to move out of the property by September, 2015 in order to develop a best practice model for Merton residents.
- 3.3 MCCG have protected the existing level of investment to enable SWLSTG to enter into informed discussions with potential housing partners, and agree a sub-contractual relationship that will deliver the best outcomes for Merton residents.
- 3.4 SWLSTG and MCCG have both made a commitment to involve service user and carer representatives in key decisions moving forward such as the choice of housing provider,
- 3.5 All acknowledge that these substantive arrangements are unlikely to be in place by the time that Norfolk Lodge closes and are thus making arrangements with existing local providers for individual bespoke placements that may be required over the interim period, to ensure that service users are supported at the right level of care according to their needs.
- 3.6 This process is about a renewal and improvement of the step-down service for Merton residents and the environment from where it is delivered, and not about the closure of the existing facility.
- 3.7 This process needs to be seen as one work stream within a wider review of supported accommodation for Merton residents with mental health needs.

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