

Appendix One: HCHS Statement re closure of Hythe Hospital to inpatient admissions.

The safety of our patients is of paramount importance to us. We always strive to provide the best care for our patients in a safe and secure environment. Therefore, it is our responsibility to ensure that if, at any time, this safety is compromised, or seen to be compromised in the future, that we take the appropriate action to allow us to continue the standard of care we and our patients expect.

Hythe Hospital has been providing a high-quality provision of care to our patients for many years. However, we have been attempting to overcome a challenge to recruit nursing professionals to the hospital for the past 18 months, which, despite our best efforts, has not always proved fruitful. The current staff on the site have also worked hard to meet our stringent infection control standards; however the environment at Hythe has presented significant challenges in achieving this. Despite this, the hospital has managed to provide a service to a slightly higher number of patients in these beds this year.

As staff have left their posts for pastures new, or retired from service, the staffing level at Hythe has continued to drop. We are completely happy that this situation has been manageable until now, however, we are about to reach a staffing situation which will mean that we would be unable to provide a qualified HCHC member of staff on every ward shift. Whilst we can deploy agency or bank staff to supplement this, which would mean that there would be enough staff on each ward, they would not be employees of HCHC, and may not have the right level of understanding of our policies, procedures and standards. Following continual monitoring of the situation, we have concluded that this and the ward environment, if left to continue, would compromise the care we could provide to patients. Therefore, we have taken the appropriate decision to temporarily close admissions to Hythe.

To mitigate this, we will be increasing the provision of our inpatient services at Lymington New Forest Hospital and Fordingbridge Hospital, both of which have additional inpatient beds that will be re-enabled (we are aware that approx 54% of the previous inpatients at Hythe are from the Lymington area already). This will mean that Waterside and Totton patients will still have a transfer pathway to access rehabilitation following illness or injury. The enhanced medical cover and access to diagnostics at Lymington will support early transfers from acute trusts to rehabilitation. The patients currently in Hythe will remain with us at the site until they are medically ready to be discharged, and we are completely happy that our staffing situation is strong enough to make sure they receive the right level and standard of care.

All staff affected at Hythe have been briefed today, have been engaged throughout the process and are aware of the current situation. We are working with our HR team to keep them informed of any process concerning their roles on a short-term basis. It is important to stress that the closure is temporary at

this stage, and there is already a stream of work to review the patient services in the Waterside area in the future, which will continue.