

Delivering healthcare in the Odiham area

Questions and Answers

Q. I have heard that the hospital is being closed. Why is this?

A. A nursed service is commissioned at the hospital by NHS Hampshire, with the service being provided by Hampshire Community Health (HCHC). The contract to provide the nursing care comes to an end on March 31 2011 and HCHC has determined that for a number of reasons they do not wish to continue providing nursing staff to the hospital via a new contract.

Q. Does the service end on March 31, 2011?

A. The contract NHS Hampshire has with the provider does finish at the end of March. However, in order to have more time to consider and engage with people on how else nursed or bed-based care could be provided for people living in the area, it has been agreed that the nursing service will remain in place until the end of July 2011.

Q. Why was this decision taken?

A. Hampshire Community Health Care's decision to no longer provide twenty-four hour nursing care at the site is based around the fact that in order to provide safe services, significant mitigation of clinical risk has to be made. This includes difficulty in recruiting permanent and bank staff, which in turn has led to high agency staff usage and a consistent overspend on staffing costs. The decision was taken in conjunction with the service commissioner, NHS Hampshire.

Q. Why can't you find another organisation to provide the nursing care?

A. Considerable efforts have been made to try and find an alternative provider. There are on-going discussions with other health providers in the area, but at this stage no other provider has been found.

Q. If the hospital closes what will happen to the patients who would have gone there?

A. There will always be safe, high quality, and appropriate nursed care solutions for patients needing this form of care. However, the way we care for patients is changing, with more people wanting to be treated at home by community nursing staff and the increasing use of nursing homes for short stays that enable patients to recover enough confidence and skills to return to their own homes.

Q. Will patients be placed in beds that are much further away from their homes?

A. Our overriding priority is to ensure that people are treated in the best place for them and their illness or injury. This may mean nursed care at home, staying in a nursing home for a short time, or being referred to a hospital. Wherever possible we would want to keep people as close as we possibly can to their home environment.

Q. We hear so much about bed-blocking, surely losing beds at Odiham would only make this worse?

A. Any discharge from an acute hospital such as Basingstoke or Frimley can only be made to somewhere that can meet the on-going needs of that individual patient. In many cases patients being discharged need physiotherapy to enable their return home and Odiham does not have facilities to offer this type of care. Other hospitals locally can offer both the excellent bed-based care of Odiham and the physiotherapy needed to help patients return home.

Q. You have ‘targeted’ Odiham before for closure. Why aren’t you looking at other community hospitals?

A. Odiham is not being ‘targeted’ and it is not the only community hospital in Hampshire that we are currently reviewing. NHS Hampshire must ensure that the best quality care is delivered to people in a clinically safe and cost effective way. That is our primary objective.

NHS Hampshire remains committed to ensuring local people can access a range of community health care services that are of a high standard, both in terms of safety and quality of care and that are cost-effective.

Q. Patients receive much better care at Odiham than at a large hospital. Why would you want this to end?

A. Everyone deserves high quality care when they are sick or injured, but there are many ways to achieve this. That is why we are working with the stakeholder group and this includes representatives from the hospital trustees, the local parish council, the league of friends and district and county councils, to consider all the possible options for meeting local health needs.

Q. Odiham is a really good example of the ‘Big Society’ in action. Why are you therefore trying to quash this community spirit?

A. The community spirit shown towards Odiham Cottage Hospital is remarkable and commendable. What we are now trying to do is ensure this continues by working with the hospital trustees to identify possible future health uses for the building if an alternative provider cannot be found.