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Cllr Karen Calder
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Date: 18 June 2018

Dear Karen

Re: Phlebotomy Services

I would like to reassure you that SaTH does recognise that it is under a duty to make arrangements, as respects health services for which it is responsible, which secure that users of those services, whether directly or through representatives, are involved (whether by being consulted or provided with information, or in other ways) in certain circumstances. This includes the phlebotomy service provided by the Trust and that there a duty to make arrangements to involve the public in the decision to move from Princess House in the Town Centre to Elizabeth House at RSH.

Some of the rationale for the change reflects that although there is a change to the manner of their delivery, it is relatively minor in the sense that the service remains fully available in Shrewsbury, albeit approximately two miles away from Princess House. Whilst recognising that for some patients there may be additional travel it is important to note that patients can drive directly to Elizabeth House and would in fact find parking to be cheaper, more available and closer to the clinic than that available in Shrewsbury Town Centre. There is also a 20 minute free parking period at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital which would be sufficient for many phlebotomist appointments. Visitors can also purchase a 10-visit concessionary ticket for £8 (i.e. 80p per visit) regardless of the time spent on site.

The clinic at Elizabeth House is itself considerably more accessible to patients with mobility issues, being located on the ground floor as opposed to on the fifth floor at Princess House. Access to the fifth floor of Princess House is by several flights of stairs or use of a lift, both of which can prove difficult for some patients. Access to resources is restricted at Princess House, in the event of patients needing medical or nursing assistance. Elizabeth House is co-located with a range of other services and clinics that may be used by patients.

You are aware that whilst we provided this service in the town centre at the request of two town centre GP practices, when this was originally introduced the Trust supplied the staff but were not charged for the accommodation, recognising this was a benefit for primary care. However, the Trust has been invoiced rent during 2017/18 and has paid these but of course this £32k is money that has to have been funded from elsewhere in the Trust as these is no additional activity to offset.

In response to this issue, the Trust has engaged with the CCG and Riverside and Claremont Bank GP Practices to identify ways to continue the service or look at possible alternatives, but ultimately no viable solution was identified and whilst we recognise that the Community Trust is entitled to insist upon a rent being payable going forward, there is now an additional pressure on the Trust. When the opportunity to acquire a clinic room in Elizabeth House for the phlebotomy service arose in January 2018, which led to the relocation.

Nonetheless, the Trust does acknowledge that there was a lack of direct engagement with service users prior to the Decision being taken and, had such engagement been carried out, it may have enabled the Trust to identify any concerns raised and take them into account. However, for the reasons set out above, the Decision may have been unavoidable.

The Pathology Centre is undertaking a survey of all patients now attending Elizabeth House for the service that previously would have attended Princess House, seeking views on their experiences, preferred location and reasons, for a three month period. The Trust will fully consider the results and look to identify a satisfactory conclusion and find a permanent location for this service. Interestingly, there was no such engagement when the service was originally provided at Princess House.

In answer to your specific question; the timescale for the engagement is from May – July and we will be surveying patients attending Elizabeth House for blood tests asking their preferences on future location:

- o Princess House, top floor – town centre
- o Alternative town centre ground floor location
- o Your own GP practice
- o An alternative GP surgery in the community
- o Elizabeth House at The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

The survey is being handed to patients attending Elizabeth House for blood tests and distinguishes patients who previously used the Princess House service.

We are working with the Trust's Community Engagement Facilitator and will involve patient representatives once we have a clearer idea of the alternative location options.

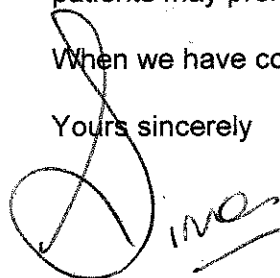
So far, patients who previously used Princess House have indicated the following preferences (some patients have chosen more than one option):

Princess House – top floor	53.5%
Alt Town Centre Ground Floor	16.8%
Own GP	33.5%
Alternative, nearby GP	3.2%
RSH Elizabeth House	29.0%

Around half of the patients surveyed in May indicated their preference to return to Princess House. The survey invites patients to comment further and this is providing useful further insight into their reasoning and how we can improve the Elizabeth House service further, for example, by improving signage. Another aspect is that until we are able to identify the alternative town centre location, patients may prefer to vote for an option with which they are familiar.

When we have completed the survey we will share the results and consider the next steps.

Yours sincerely



Simon Wright
Chief Executive