

Eliminating Mixed-Sex Accommodation

Declaration of Compliance

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust is pleased to confirm that we are compliant with the Government's requirements to eliminate mixed-sex accommodation, **except** when it is in the patient's best overall interest, or reflects their personal choice.

We have the necessary facilities, resources and culture to ensure that patients who are admitted to our hospitals will only share the room where they sleep with members of the same sex, and same-sex toilets and bathrooms will be close to their bed area. Sharing with members of the opposite sex will only happen when clinically necessary (for example where patients need specialist equipment such as the ECT suite), or when patients actively choose to share.

If our care should fall short of the required standard, we will report it. We will also set up an audit mechanism to make sure that we do not misclassify any of our reports.

What are our plans for the future?

Same-sex accommodation means:

The room where your bed is will only have patients of the same sex as you.

Your toilet and bathroom will be just for your gender, and will be close to your bed area.

It is possible that there will be both men and women patients on the ward, but they will not share your sleeping area. You may have to cross a ward corridor to reach your bathroom, but you will not have to walk through opposite-sex areas.

You may share some communal space, such as day and dining rooms although plans are well advanced to provide female only lounges in all in-patient areas. It is very likely that you will see both men and woman patients as you move around the hospital.

It is probable that visitors of the opposite gender will come to your room where your bed is, and this may include patients visiting each other.

It is almost certain that both male and female nurses, doctors and other staff will come into your bed area.

If you need help to use the toilet or take a bath (e.g. you need a hoist or special bath) then you may be taken to a "unisex" bathroom used by both men and woman, but a member of staff will be with you, and other patients will not be in the bathroom at the same time.

The NHS will not turn patients away just because a "right sex" bed is not immediately available.

Patient Experience

Action has already been taken to identify clear measures to enable the Trust to measure performance, including feedback from patients who use our services, and report that progress on a regular basis both to the Trust Board and to Commissioners.

Work will continue to ensure that this work is regularly monitored and reported to ensure the Trust Board and Commissioners are assured of compliance and assured satisfaction levels.

Staff Culture

The Trust is committed to eliminating mixed-sex accommodation and in doing this the Trust will, as normal practice, deliver care with privacy and dignity of which delivering same-sex accommodation is an integral component.

The Trust Board reaffirmed its collective responsibility during a public Trust Board meeting in March 2011 and updated its Policy for Privacy, Dignity and Respect to ensure that this is explicit.

The Trust will continue to take action to fully embed this approach and apply the rigour of investigating and responding to any occurrences where it is breached, for example by reviewing patient complaints; incidents; comments, etc to identify whether there are any further lessons to be learnt regarding the provision of same-sex accommodation.

How will we measure success?

The Trust will measure success as follows:

- Evidence of transparent and regular reporting of performance in Trust Board reports and in reports to Commissioners and:
- Securing improvements in patient satisfaction in relation to same-sex accommodation as measured by the national in-patient survey and local surveys.

What do I do if I am in mixed-sex accommodation?

We want to know your experiences. Please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) co-ordinator on Freephone 0800 389 9676 if you have any comments or concerns.