Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
caring supporting improving together

FOI/31127

29 May 2024

Escalated Bed Spaces

Please accept the below as requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

1. **The number of escalated bed spaces within the Trust's hospitals.**

   Adult Emergency Departments

   Royal Victoria Hospital Emergency Department (RVH ED) has 38 dedicated clinical spaces – funded.

   During March 2024, there were an average of 57 patients awaiting inpatient care in the RVH ED each morning at 8am. These patients were cared for in non-clinical spaces, on a trolley, chair or bed depending on their clinical needs.

   The service has rostered an additional five Registrants, plus four non-registrants, to care for patients awaiting inpatient care, which is over and above our funded position.

   Mater Infirmorum Hospital Emergency Department (MIH ED) has 21 dedicated clinical spaces – funded,

   During March 2024, there were an average of 20 patients awaiting inpatient care in the MIH ED each morning at 8am. These patients were cared for in non-clinical spaces, on a trolley, chair or bed depending on their clinical needs.

   The service has rostered one additional Registrant, plus one non-registrant, to care for patients awaiting inpatient care, which is over and above our funded position.

   Paediatric Emergency Department

   Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children Emergency Department has nine funded cubicles and during March had five unfunded beds opened in ward areas, which were in continuous use. The service would be unable to provide any patient numbers in terms of occupancy or throughput.

   Musgrave Park Hospital (MPH) Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation Areas

   For MPH Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation areas = 0
   MPH are currently not using boarding spaces in these areas.

   One Withers Orthopaedic Ward has flipped to caring for frail elderly patients who are delayed discharges from RVH Fracture Service - 20 beds.

Mental Health

There are 80 commissioned beds in the Acute Mental Health Inpatient Centre (AMHIC) and 5 lounge rooms that are used as escalated bed spaces for patients when all 80 beds are in use.

For the period from April 2023 to March 2024 AMHIC was over occupied on 212 occasions.

2. A copy of the health and safety assessments completed for escalated bed spaces within the Trust's hospitals - we would be content to receive a copy of the risk assessment template used.

Belfast Trust is managing significant pressures on all hospital and community services and our staff are working in extreme circumstances to protect the safety and dignity of patients. Unfortunately, the demand for hospital services has resulted in some of our patients being cared for in beds, chairs and trollies in non-clinical areas, including corridors within wards and department areas.

All additional escalated bed spaces / wards have been risk assessed and we aim to use these areas for the shortest period of time possible. Risk assessments are dynamic and need to take into consideration changing circumstances. These will be completed in advance of allocating a patient to an escalated bed space, the risk assessment will detail the mitigations that need to be put in place to minimise risk of harm to patients and to ensure patient dignity and privacy. It is of paramount importance that patients and their relatives / carers are clearly communicated with to ensure they are fully aware that they or their family member will be accommodated in an area that is not a bed space or if they are being transferred to any escalation area that these areas are not inpatient ward environments. Our priority is to ensure that when patients no longer require acute inpatient hospital services that they leave hospital as soon as they are medically fit and it is safe to do so. This releases care space for those acutely unwell patients waiting for inpatient care.

We are doing everything we can to reduce pressure on our emergency departments and wards. We are continuously working to improve safe alternative access to our services to avoid hospital admissions, as well as improving the ability to support those requiring ongoing care needs across community services.

A risk assessment template is attached as a separate document.

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3. The number of complaints received by the Trust per year for the last five years

Belfast Trust received the following numbers of formal consented complaints for calendar years 2019 to 2024:

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	01 Jan to 30 Apr 2024
1736	1177	1425	1623	1547	610

4. The number of complaints received by the Trust in relation to escalated bed spaces per year, for the last five years.

The Trust received the following numbers of formal consented complaints in relation to escalated bed spaces for calendar years from 2019 to 2024:

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	01 Jan to 30 Apr 2024
4	5	4	12	8	5