

TRUST BOARD MEETING –MARCH 2010

Title of the Paper:	Privacy & Dignity: Same Sex Accommodation (SSA)
Agenda item:	Item accepted as AOB
Authors:	Tracy Moran, Interim Director of Nursing
Trust Objective:	To be compliant with the Department of Health Same Sex Accommodation directive
Purpose: <p>This report provides the Board assurance that we are compliant against the same sex accommodation directive. However it is recognised that there are some exceptional circumstances, where providing fast effective care for the patient may take priority over ensuring same-sex accommodation. This is most likely to happen if a patient needs emergency or specialist care and will only happen by exception.</p>	
Risk Implications for the Trust (<i>including any clinical and financial consequences</i>):	Mitigating Actions (<i>Controls</i>):
Potential breaches in providing same sex accommodation in clinical areas –could lead to financial penalties from 1 st April 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same Sex Accommodation delivery plan driven by Phase 3 project Group • Decision to mix reporting- monthly incidence report of all incidences • Root cause analysis of non clinically justified decisions to mix • Audit and patient surveys to monitor compliance • Working in partnership with PCT SSA lead to address challenges
Level of Assurance that can be given to the Trust Board from the Report Sufficient.	
Legal Implication None	
Links to Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE 1 - 5) 5.4 The results of patient feedback on services and resulting action plans for improvement are reported to the Board. Progress on areas relating to privacy and dignity are routinely reported to the Board.	
Recommendation to the Trust Board: For discussion and Trust Board Members to sign off the Compliance statement, supporting the delivery of same sex accommodation across our Hospitals	

Public Board Meeting:

Privacy & Dignity: Same Sex Accommodation (SSA)

Presented by: Tracy Moran, Interim Director of Nursing

1. Introduction

Every patient has the right to receive high quality care that is safe, effective and respects their privacy and dignity. A three-phased approach has been adopted within the Trust to ensure that the organisation is providing same sex accommodation across all in patient clinical areas from April 1st 2010.

The Organisation is now deemed compliant. However, there are some exceptional circumstances (such as where the patients' needs require specialised or urgent care), where providing fast effective care for the patient may take priority over ensuring same-sex accommodation.

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust is committed to providing every patient with same sex accommodation, as it helps to safeguard their privacy and dignity when they are often at their most vulnerable. This is one of the guiding principles of the NHS Constitution (2009) and at the core of local NHS visions.

The Department of Health (May 2009) define same sex accommodation as follows:

Men and Women should not have to share sleeping accommodation or toilet facilities and should not need to pass through opposite sex accommodation or toilet and washing facilities to access their own.

2. Delivering Same Sex Accommodation

The Board can be assured that mixed sex accommodation has been virtually eliminated in our trust. Patients who are admitted to any of our hospitals will only share the room where they sleep with people of the same sex, and will be able to access same sex toilets and bathrooms close to their bed area.

However it is recognised that there are some exceptional circumstances, where providing fast effective care for the patient may take priority over ensuring same-sex accommodation. This is most likely to happen if a patient needs emergency or specialist care and will only happen by exception.

2.1. What does this mean for patients?

Other than in the exceptional circumstances set out above, patients admitted to West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust can expect to find the following:

- Same sex sleeping areas
- Same sex toilet and washing facilities will be close to the patients bed area
- It is possible that there will be both men and women patients on the ward, but they will not share the same sleeping area.
- Patients may have to cross a ward corridor to reach the bathroom, but will not have to walk through opposite-sex areas.
- Patients may share some communal space, such as day rooms and it is very likely that that patients will see both men and women patients as they move around the hospital.
- It is probable that visitors of the opposite gender will come into same sex sleeping area and this may include patients visiting each other.

2.2 Sustaining best practice

The Same Sex Accommodation Delivery Plan outlines specific actions to ensure our patients continue to be cared for in same sex accommodation and the decision to mix is always the exception rather than the norm. This will be driven by a phase 3 project group whose core purpose is to monitor compliance, sustain best practice and critically review incidences when there was a decisions to mix sexes. A compliance statement has been prepared and will be published following Board approval. (Appendix1)

2.3 How will we measure success?

- Bi monthly patient surveys
- Monthly same sex accommodation audit
- Monthly report on decisions to mix
- Root cause analysis of decisions to mix that were not clinically justified
- Quality account reporting of compliance

3. Conclusion

The board can be assured that we are compliant against the same sex accommodation directive. However it is recognised that there are some exceptional circumstances, where providing fast effective care for the patient may take priority over ensuring same-sex accommodation. This is most likely to happen if a patient needs emergency or specialist care and will only happen by exception.

It is acknowledged that the intensive drive at West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust to eradicate mixed sex accommodation is crucial to improving the patients' experience. It is anticipated that there will continue to be substantial improvement in reported patient experience for same sex accommodation.

Tracy Moran
Interim Director of Nursing
March 2010

Appendix 1

Delivering Same Sex Accommodation Statement of Compliance

Every patient has the right to receive high quality care that is safe, effective and respects their privacy and dignity. West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust is committed to providing every patient with same sex accommodation, because it helps to safeguard their privacy and dignity when they are often at their most vulnerable.

We are proud to confirm that mixed sex accommodation has been virtually eliminated in our trust. Patients who are admitted to any of our hospitals will only share the room where they sleep with people of the same sex, and will be able to access same sex toilets and bathrooms close to their bed area.

However it is recognised that there are some exceptional circumstances, where providing fast effective care for the patient may take priority over ensuring same-sex accommodation. This is most likely to happen if a patient needs emergency or specialist care and will only happen by exception.

What does this mean for patients?

Other than in the exceptional circumstances set out above, patients admitted to West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust can expect to find the following

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 rooms and it is very likely that you will see both men and women patients as you move around the hospital (eg on your way to X-ray or the operating theatre).

It is probable that visitors of the opposite gender will come into the 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.

We will not turn patients away just because a “right-sex” bed is not immediately available

What are our plans for the future?

Our Same Sex Accommodation Delivery Plan outlines specific actions to ensure our patients continue to be cared for in same sex accommodation and the decision to mix is always the exception rather than the norm.

How will we measure success?

Your experience matters to us. We will continue to audit your experience and satisfaction. You may be approached for your views through a process of bi monthly audit, ward based satisfaction surveys and through telephone and postal surveys.

In addition any immediate concerns you have whilst staying with us can be discussed with the Senior Nursing staff, which will give us the opportunity to resolve any issues which are impacting on your experience of dignified care.

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

If you are placed in a bay with patients of the opposite sex, a nurse will explain why this has been necessary and gain your consent to remain in the mixed sex area until it is safe to move you to a same sex area. Every effort will be made to ensure your privacy and dignity is maintained whilst in that area.

If you feel you do not understand why you have been placed in a mixed sex environment please ask to speak to the Senior Nurse on duty.

If you feel your concerns have not been resolved then you can speak to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who will advise and help you.

The PALS office can be contacted by email: pals@whht.nhs.uk, or by phone, on: 01923 217198