

HOSC Briefing (January 2017)

Chemotherapy Services in East Kent

Introduction

In September and October 2015, East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust provided HOSC with an update about the Celia Blakey chemotherapy unit at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. The Trust reported to the HOSC that the chemotherapy unit was expected to reopen in July 2016.

On 2 September 2016 the Trust provided HOSC with a further briefing which stated that the unit was expected to reopen by the end of 2016.

This short report outlines the work that the Trust has been doing to improve staffing levels for the chemotherapy service over the past twelve months and provides HOSC with assurance that the service will return to the William Harvey Hospital by the end of March / beginning of April 2017.

Staffing Pressures

In June 2015, the Celia Blakey Centre at the William Harvey Hospital, Ashford reported an emerging staffing risk of a reduction in 50% of its permanent workforce. This was as a result of a mixture of staff leaving the service, maternity leave and long-term sickness. Consequently, the Trust was presented with a patient safety issue and required the service to consider how it would safely continue to deliver care to patients.

As described in the previous HOSC briefing, a number of options were considered and discussed with the Divisional Leadership Team and Executives.

Over the last year the Trust has been recruiting and training nurses and the Chemotherapy Service has had a targeted recruitment and retention campaign. This involved a benchmarking exercise with other Chemotherapy Services as it was recognised that EKHUFT Chemotherapy trained staff were leaving to join other Trusts once they had achieved their chemotherapy competencies. As a result of this we now have a fully staffed team, with a minimal number of vacancies across the Chemotherapy Services



Timescales for Returning to WHH

Following the previous briefing, work is progressing with the refurbishment of the Arundel Unit. There was a delay in this work due to the original construction company going into administration and the work commenced November 2016. A completion date has been given for the end of February/ March 2017. The aim is move patients in a gradual, planned process to ensure a smooth transition to the new updated premises.

