

Eliminating Mixed Gender Hospital Inpatient Accommodation Statement of Assurance 2021-2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Every patient has the right to receive high quality care that is safe, effective and respects their privacy and dignity. Whittington Health NHS Trust is committed to providing every patient with same gender accommodation because it helps to safeguard their privacy and dignity when they are often at their most vulnerable. Patients who are admitted to hospital will only share the room or ward bay where they sleep, with members of the same gender, and same gender toilets and bathrooms will be close to their bed area. Sharing with members of another gender will only happen by exception based on clinical need (for example where patients need specialist care or equipment is needed such as in the high dependency cardiac care unit (Montuschi Ward) and critical care unit or when patients choose to share for instance in chemotherapy or thalassaemia unit) or through agreement between staff and patient based on patient dignity.
- 1.2 The term 'gender' is used in this statement to refer to an individual's sense of themselves and is based on an understanding of gender as a biopsychosocial developed aspect of identity. Gender describes a part of a person's identity which is wider than their biological or legal sex.
- 1.3 The Trust recognise that some patients (referred to as trans gender) may have changed or be in the process of changing the gender they live in from one gender to another, and/or may not identify as male or female.
- 1.4 The Trust is responsible for ensuring that all patients and relatives/carers as appropriate are aware of the guidance and are informed of any decisions that may lead to the patient being placed in, or remaining in, mixed gender accommodation.
- 1.5 Decisions to mix will be based on the patient's clinical condition and not on constraints of the environment or convenience of staff.

2. What does this mean for patients

- 2.1 Other than in the circumstances set out above, patients admitted to the hospital can expect to find the following:
- The ward bed bay will only have patients of the same gender
 - The toilet and bathroom will be just one gender, and will be close to the bed area
 - It is possible that there will be patients of different genders on the same ward but they will not share the sleeping area. Patients may have to cross a ward corridor to reach the bathroom, but patients will not have to walk through differently gendered areas
 - Patients may share some communal space, such as day rooms or dining rooms, and it is very likely that they will see patients of other

genders as they move around the hospital (e.g. on way to X-ray or the operating theatre)

- It is probable that visitors of another gender will come into the ward or bay this may include patients visiting each other
- It is almost certain that nurses, doctors and other staff of all genders will care for patients
- If personal assistance is required (e.g. hoist or adapted bath) then patients may be taken to a “unisex” bathroom used by people of all genders, but a member of staff will be with the patient, and other patients will not be in the bathroom at the same time
- Patients who have undergone or are undergoing a process of gender transition (transgender) will be accommodated in the bay appropriate for the gender they are currently living in, there will be no requirement to show legal recognition in this gender
- Where there is reason to believe that a trans gender patient may be more comfortable being accommodated with patients of another gender or in a side room, this will be discussed with them privately and an agreement arrived at between patient and staff. Knowledge of a patient’s history of transition will not automatically lead to this question being raised where there would otherwise be no question over where a patient should be accommodated
- Patients who do not identify as male or as female will necessarily not be accommodated with other patients of the same gender or alone, but will be accommodated with either male or female patients as based on agreement between the patient and staff
- Where a patient is unable to contribute to the decision being made about their accommodation, the advice of family or carers will be sought where possible, and a decision made based on available indicators (name, manner of dress, etc.) where advice is not available, until such time as the patient can contribute to the decision being made.

3. Statement of assurance

- 3.1 The Whittington will not turn patients away just because a “right gender” bed is not immediately available.
- 3.2 The Board is committed to on going delivery of single gender accommodation.
- 3.3 To ensure that there is an on going process in place to measure patient experience of single gender accommodation performance is provided to the Trust Board (contained within the Integrated Performance Report).
- 3.4 For people who sleep in shared spaces with people of the same gender, Trust staff will do everything possible to ensure dignity and privacy.
- 3.5 To ensure there is a process to track other mechanisms for determining patient experience of single gender accommodation, e.g. through patient complaints/concerns/comments.

- 3.6 Episodes of mixed gender accommodation breaches for non-clinical reasons will be reported to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) through monthly performance reports and reviewed at the trust Quality Assurance Committee meeting.
- 3.7 To provide information leaflets for patients on single gender accommodation and ensure they are used by staff in discussions with patient.
- 3.8 Delivery of single gender accommodation will always be considered when planning any new or refurbished estate development scheme.
- 3.9 If care should fall short of the required standard, the Trust will report it.
- 3.10 There is an internal monitoring process to ensure the Trust does not misclassify any reports.
- 3.11 The trust will publish results within the Integrated Performance Report presented to the Trust Board
- 3.12 Where there are rare occurrences of gender mixing for non clinical reasons, a process exists to investigate the reason and take remedial actions as required to prevent future occurrence (reported as clinical incidents). This may occur during the major incident period of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- 3.13 The relevant Trust policies will refer to requirement to delivering single gender.
- 3.14 The Trust believes that delivering single gender accommodation should be the norm. Mixing will only occur by exception for reasons of clinical justification or patient choice.
- 3.15 If mixing does occur, staff will attempt to rectify the situation as soon as possible, whilst safeguarding the patient's dignity and keeping the patient informed about why the situation occurred and what is being done to address it (with an indication of how long this will take).
- 3.16 Issues of privacy/dignity and single gender accommodation are included in mandatory staff training and induction and the trust provides training to support the elimination of mixed gender accommodation and to promote the protection of privacy and dignity.
- 3.17 The Trust will ensure all staff are aware of the guidance and how they manage requirements around recognising, reporting, and eliminating mixed-sex breaches
- 3.18 The Trust will ensure there are no exemptions from the need to provide high standards of privacy and dignity at all times.