

Case Study

Identifying the best setting for intermediate care, Castleberg Community Hospital

Background

Castleberg hospital is an intermediate care facility near Settle of approximately 10 beds which flexes according to winter pressures. It was closed on a temporary basis in 2017 because of patient safety issues related to the structure of the building. The service is commissioned by Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group (AWC CCG), who asked the Senate to provide an independent clinical perspective on the options for the future of Castleberg Community Hospital and the services provided within that facility. The Senate focused on providing a response to the following question:

Can the Clinical Senate provide an independent clinical assessment of the option to close Castleberg Community Hospital and the services provided at that facility and provide care at home or in a community setting compared to the other options of continuing to commission an inpatient hospital facility in North Craven? What risks, issues, opportunities or concerns does the Senate advise the commissioner to consider as they reach a conclusion on their preferred option?

The Problem

Castleberg is a centralised centre for patients that is known to the community, staff and local acute health settings and acts as a central focus of the out of hospital health pathway for patients. However, following ongoing issues with the power supply, heating and drainage issues Airedale NHS Foundation Trust – which runs services at the hospital – was no longer confident that the building was safe for inpatient care, or for the health and wellbeing of its staff. As a result, inpatient services were temporarily withdrawn on 13 April 2017. A similar temporary closure took place in 2008 and the issues with the maintenance of this building are well recognised.

Our Advice

The Senate recognised that the CCG already has a comprehensive community approach to intermediate care and advised that the option to close Castleberg Community Hospital and invest funding in providing care through an alternative care model compared favourably against the other options presented. The Senate advised that the assessment and evaluation of the options should be improved for public consultation.

The report also included recommendations on the areas where the CCG could improve the explanation of the community services model, give further assurance about the capacity of the community service and the GP commitment to the model. The Senate also recommended that the CCG demonstrate to the public the sustainability of the planned inpatient provision in care homes.

Our Impact

Airedale Wharfedale and Craven CCG, which were leading on the consultation were able to use the advice from the Senate to feed in to the consultation and provide reassurance to the public that the alternative care model was valid, evidence based and was supported by experience from similar services elsewhere in the country. This will provide support to the decision making body that the alternative care model can be robust, safe and appropriate to the needs of the population.

Testimonial

"Airedale Wharfedale and Craven CCG are extremely grateful for the work that the panel, assembled by the Clinical Senate, did in supporting our consultation process. In any review of services in a small, local area, particularly which may involve closing a facility there can be a suspicion from the Public that the consultation is a futile exercise and that a decision has already been made. This was articulated by several attendees at our consultation events and suggested in letters to the local press.

Using the Senate in the way that we did allowed us to secure a completely independent assessment of the options, pulling together expertise that we would have found difficult to identify, both clinical and lay, and who were able to be seen as completely impartial.

The consultation will be completed at the end of February 2018 and the decision on the future of Castleberg Hospital will be made in the next few months but we can be confident that we have done all we can to ensure that we have taken account of the impartial and well informed opinions of the Senate panel."



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