

Eliminating Mixed Sex Accommodation

The NHS has committed to eliminate mixed – sex accommodation where possible and where the need to admit and treat takes priority over complete segregation, privacy and dignity will be maximised.

NHS Leeds is dedicated to the improvement of the patient's experience of privacy and dignity, and as such we are working closely with local providers to eliminate areas where privacy and dignity may be compromised by patients sharing sleeping or sanitary arrangements.

What does this mean?

Single sexed accommodation can be provided in a variety of ways:

- Single sex accommodation within mixed wards (bays or rooms which accommodate either men or women, not both; with a designated single – sex toilet and washing facility preferably within or near / next to the bay or room.
- Single sex wards (the whole ward is occupied by men or women not both).
- Single rooms with adjacent single sex toilet

How will we achieve this?

We are dedicated to commissioning and delivering services that ensure patients are cared for in a dignified manner and to this end we are working together with a number of key actions:

- Privacy and dignity self assessment audits asking patients to rate criteria about what is important to them
- Develop prioritised action plans on completion of audit recommendations
- A rolling programme for privacy and dignity audit
- Reconfigure and relocate identified clinical services taking opportunity to improve accommodation to patients
- Use opportunities of service review and redesign to consult with patients and make accommodation purely single sexed
- Designate some wards to either male or female

- Ensure procurement of new services are able to provide single sexed accommodation
- Increase the availability of more side rooms

NHS Leeds intends to continually evaluate implementation of action plans and improvement of the privacy and dignity offered to its patients.

What has happened so far?

Audit of accommodation

Providers of hospital care in Leeds have undertaken audits to assess the level of compliance with requirements for the provision of single-sex facilities. This has enabled them to understand the areas of challenge as well as areas of good practice. The amount of modern, purpose built hospital accommodation has improved significantly over recent years, but there are still some areas where privacy and dignity could be better. Both Leeds Teaching Hospitals and Leeds Partnerships Foundation Trust identified areas that they believed could be improved.

Challenge Fund

To help address these challenges, NHS Leeds supported bids to the government's 'Eliminating Mixed-sex Accommodation' fund by Leeds Partnerships Foundation Trust and Leeds Teaching Hospitals earlier this year for funding to improve accommodation. We are pleased to be able to report that both Trusts were successful in their bids. This has enabled them to make significant changes and improvements to ensure that patients' privacy and dignity is protected.

As a result, Leeds Partnerships Foundation Trust has installed better bathroom facilities in The Mount and at Askett Croft, and improved privacy and dignity at Parkside Lodge.

At Leeds Teaching Hospitals, work is well underway on a major programme of improvement and change across all sites. Examples of this work are:

- Conversion of a significant number of mixed-sex wards into wholly single-sex wards.
- Improvement of wards that accommodate both men and women to ensure that male and female bathroom, toilet and sleeping facilities are separate and that patients do not have to walk through areas occupied by the opposite sex to reach them.
- Improvement of signage in all areas to ensure that patients are directed to appropriate facilities for use by people of their own gender.

Some of these changes have already been made, whilst other areas will take longer. This is because in some cases it is not possible to make changes on a ward without closing it and temporarily relocating to another ward whilst alterations take place.

What other plans are there?

We want to know whether patients feel that hospital accommodation has improved, and that their privacy and dignity is protected. As such we will be supporting both organisations in assessing patient experience through surveys and direct discussion with patients. This could include, for example, the use of hand-held devices that enable staff to gather information quickly and avoid the need for patients to complete questionnaires. Other methods will be through information gathered through analysis of any complaints and compliments, and from the results of patient discussion groups. We will act accordingly where we identify areas that might not meet the needs and expectations of patients.