EAST KENT HOSPITALS FOUNDATION TRUST: DEVELOPING AN ONSITE TEACHING-NURSING HOME

Summary

In response to growing demographic pressures in Kent, East Kent Hospitals Foundation Trust (EHUFT) is developing a nursing home adjacent to the trust to support patient transition to and from an acute setting, and to increase the number of traditional nursing home places in the area.

This has the potential to offer significant benefits to the wider health economy by providing a centre of excellence for geriatric care. By locating the nursing home at one of its acute sites, patients would be able to benefit from a high level of clinical care, contact time with clinicians and easy access to healthcare facilities.

The nursing home will also be a teaching institution, providing clinical training in geriatric medicine, which will be essential in helping the trust build capacity as the elderly population in Kent grows.

Having selected Kent County Council as its strategic estates partnership, the health and social care sector in Kent is working in partnership to maximise its resources for the benefit of patients and service users in the region. The teaching nursing home will be one of the first strategic projects the trust and Council will consider.

Key facts

- By 2021, East Kent’s over-65 population will increase by 23% and as a result EKHUFT faces increasing demand set against funding challenges unless it invests in new models of care.
- As part of the trust’s clinical and older people’s strategy, the potential for an on-site teaching nursing home has been identified, to support acute capacity. As part of this EKHUFT is developing an integrated nursing-home function, supporting patient transition from an acute setting, to a point of safe discharge, or step up to acute setting, and to increase the number of traditional nursing home places in the area. This will have many secondary benefits including creating new business opportunities for the trust and supporting its workforce strategy.
- The trust is currently looking at which of the main hospital sites (Canterbury, Ashford, Margate and Dover) would be the most appropriate site for the first nursing home.
- As part of a new strategic estates partnership with Kent County Council, the development of the nursing home will be one of the first projects considered.

The issue

Kent faces a growing demographic pressure. By 2021, East Kent’s over-65 population is expected to increase by 23% and as a result EKHUFT faces the prospect of demand outpacing resources in the near future. At the same time across England, hospital admissions for those over 65% are on the increase (figure 1) – people over 85 years old account for 25% of bed days, and this has increased from 22% over the past 10 years. People over 85 also tend to spend around eight days longer in hospital than those under 65 – 11 days compared to three.

1 King’s Fund: http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/time-to-think-differently/trends/demography/ageing-population
This is set against a context of funding pressures in the NHS - as the Five year Forward View (FYFV) highlights, even if the NHS is able to deliver 1.5% of productivity annually, the NHS is still facing at least an £8 billion funding gap by 2020/21.

At the same time, the national average of delayed transfer of care patients who are awaiting nursing home placement to or availability is 10.9%, which translates to over a thousand lost bed days for EKHUFT each and every year. In light of the demographic pressures, demand on nursing home places is going to be substantial, and there is already an undersupply of nursing homes in Kent. Furthermore, with patients sometimes being kept in hospital for longer than they need to, they are not in the most medically appropriate bed for their needs.

There is now an imperative for EKHUFT to invest in new models of care to better support the increase in number of elderly patients needing care in the future. Without developing new approaches, the increasing demand, driven by the elderly population, may overwhelm the trust’s capacity over a 5-10 year time frame. Developing and implementing operational changes that meet these demands within the current financial envelope will be problematic.

The proposed solution

In order to help the trust to cope with the increasing demand from elderly patients, the trust identified the benefits of building and operating a nursing home at one of its acute sites. This programme will support the health and social care village programme (HSCV) which supports the transition of elderly patients from an acute setting to a point of safe discharge and already aims to place patients in nursing home beds for assessment and/or reablement with clinical and management support from the trust. These places are currently funded in part by the clinical commissioning group and the trust itself but this funding is not guaranteed and the trust has struggled to find appropriate places to meet patient need.

As a result, there are significant benefits for the trust to develop and own nursing homes itself not least to ensure that its health and social care village programme can be financially and operationally sustainable. This would also enable the trust to ensure that it has appropriate beds to ensure the trust has options for step up and step down beds for elderly patients outside the hospital. Being located at an acute site would mean a higher level of clinical care, contact time with clinicians and better access to healthcare facilities.

Drawing on experiences from Holland, the USA and Norway, the trust is designing the nursing home as a teaching institution. This would provide clinical training in geriatric medicine and enhance the quality of care for patients by providing a centre of excellence for geriatric care. Drawing on the experiences from other countries, this model has been found to have the following benefits:

- Promoting quality patient care
- Increasing knowledge in the care of older people requiring long term care
- Educating health professionals regarding long term care of older people
- Reducing the gap between theory and practice through research; and
- Providing education and clinical experience for students.

On this basis, the trust is initiating discussions with relevant universities and other providers of training to determine whether placements in the nursing home can be structured in a way which is mutually beneficial for the trust and local education needs.

Although the primary priority for the trust is about creating a high quality nursing home for patients, this opportunity also offers an opportunity to take advantage of the commercial opportunities presented by the changing demography. In this way, the nursing home has the potential to provide an additional income stream as the places will be funded by the CCG, local authority or self-pay by individual patients themselves and additional income through providing education and training opportunities.

The trust is not the first in the area to develop community facilities to support elderly patients before they come in to hospital and afterwards. Dartford and Gravesham NHS trust opened a new 29 bed community unit with BUPA. This allows them to care for patients who no longer need active medical input but who are waiting care packages or nursing home placements.

The trust has recently selected Kent County Council as its strategic estates partnership and a teaching nursing home will be one of the first strategic projects the trust and Council will consider. The council has access to capital and has a large land bank which means they can work together with the trust to ensure they are developing their estates programme in the best interests of patients in the area.

The outcomes

Given that the trust is still in the process of developing its proposals for a Teaching-Nursing home, further time is needed to understand the specific outcomes.

However, there are a number of clear aims behind its development:

---

4 There will be a limit on fee paying nursing home places
• Reduced admissions at EKHUFT by enabling the trust to support patients out of the hospital before their condition deteriorates;
• Improve the number of high quality traditional nursing home beds across Kent;
• Provide an opportunity to develop a teaching institution to ensure that the trust is attracting and retaining the staff it needs to meet its workforce needs;
• Improve elderly care across east Kent via the highly trained staff entering the general workforce;
• Support an increase in the number of elderly patients returning to their own home;
• Alleviate some of the pressures on EKHUFTs bed base by improving flow of elderly patients through acute beds; and
• Develop a new income stream for EKHUFT.

The lessons learnt
The trust is still developing its proposals for a teaching-nursing home but lessons to date include:
• The trust doesn’t have experience of running a nursing home and therefore they may need a 3rd party partnership to draw on expertise from others already involved in the market. This is one of the reasons why it’s so important to have Kent County Council on board as they fund a large number of nursing home beds across the area and have substantial experience in the area.
• The trust identified that a key focus of its older people’s strategy needs to be on ensuring a new model of care for patients suffering with dementia, as highlighted by the learnings from Holland’s dementia care villages. These experiences will influence the development of the Teaching-Nursing homes.
• Many nursing homes are built and run on minimum cost but the objective of the trust is to provide places at the highest possible quality. Therefore the commercial model they are developing is different to others.

Challenges ahead
• Developing the necessary expertise in the nursing home market sector;
• Identifying suitable partners and agreeing an appropriate partnership model;
• Agreeing an affordable workforce model and securing the appropriate workforce; and
• Approval of the business case, specifically the financial aspects.

Contacts
Henry Quinn, Strategic Development, henryquinn@nhs.net