

Eliminating Mixed Sex Accommodation at Kettering General Hospital

The overall aim of our same sex accommodation improvement programme is to ensure that men and women do not have to share either sleeping accommodation or toilet facilities whilst at KGH except rarely where it is clinically justified.

The need to safeguard privacy and dignity applies to all areas of care at Kettering General Hospital. However in exceptional circumstances where a patient may need very specialised or urgent care this may take priority over ensuring same sex accommodation. The time period in which a patient is cared for in this environment will be kept to an absolute minimum and care will be provided to protect the privacy and dignity of the individual.

KGH has been awarded £710,000 from the Government's Privacy and Dignity Fund to improve accommodation in our medical assessment unit and make improvements to information, signs and modesty arrangements around the Trust.

For further information:

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What does this mean for patients?

Other than in the circumstances set out above, patients admitted to Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust can expect to find the following

Same sex-accommodation means:

- The **room where your bed is** will only have patients of the same sex as you
- Your **toilet and bathroom** will be just for your gender, and will be close to your bed area

It is possible that there will be both men and women patients on the ward, but they will not share your sleeping area. You may have to cross a ward corridor to reach your bathroom, but you will not have to walk through opposite-sex areas.

You may share some communal space, such as day rooms or dining rooms, and it is very likely that you will see both men and women patients as you move around the hospital (eg on your way to X-ray or the operating theatre).

It is probable that visitors of the opposite gender will come into the room where your bed is, and this may include patients visiting each other.

It is almost certain that both male and female nurses, doctors and other staff will come into your bed area.

The NHS will not turn patients away just because a “right-sex” bed is not immediately available

Where are we now?

Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has extended its work to improve same sex accommodation across the hospital.

In October 2009 the trust announced it had completed the refurbishment of its medical assessment unit (MAU) to improve same sex accommodation.

This followed earlier improvements in Clifford Ward (October 2008) and Harrowden A and C (Summer 2010) which involved creating ensuite same sex bays and additional single rooms.

The hospital has also realigned its ward configuration to improve arrangements for same sex accommodation.

The privacy and dignity of KGH patients has always been a high priority.



While this shows our staff are doing a very good job in maintaining people's privacy and dignity we know that some of our facilities are less than the modern ideal and we have been working hard to make improvements wherever we can.

What are our plans for the future?

Patient privacy and dignity including the provision of same sex accommodation is a key consideration in all new estates work.

The way that we deliver healthcare, ie our systems and processes, are also under review in key areas of challenge.

While buildings and systems are important in improving same sex accommodation, every patient has the right to receive high quality care that is safe, effective and respects their privacy and dignity. Ultimately, this is delivered by staff commitment through attitudes, action and behaviour, firmly embedded through education and training programmes for all staff.

How will we measure success?

Patients can tell us as part of our Improving Healthcare Together survey on discharge their experiences of same sex accommodation.

A six monthly survey of patient experience will be conducted specifically to find out if our efforts are working and making a positive difference.

The NHS Inpatient Survey will give us an independent view of patient perception of compliance with same sex accommodation.

Ward/Departments will complete a Self Assessment Tool and regularly update this – reporting to the Dignity in Care Group.

Where 'breaches' of same sex occur or a complaint is made relating to same sex accommodation – these will be rigorously examined through a Root Cause Analysis and reported through CMT Integrated Patient Focus Reports.

We will use patient representatives to audit our mechanism for reporting to make sure we do not mis-classify our reports.

What do I do if I think I am in mixed sex accommodation?

We want to know about your experiences. Please contact Leanne Hackshall, Deputy Director of Nursing & Quality, Tel: 01536 493527 if you have any comments or concerns.

