

Our ref: SF/kd/20121127 FOI234 Houlebecque

Your ref:

Date: 27 November 2012

**NHS Cambridgeshire and NHS Peterborough**  
working in partnership

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Dear Mr Houlebecque

**Freedom of Information Act Request**

I am writing further to your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 dated 25 October 2012. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request. A joint NHS Peterborough and NHS Cambridgeshire response is set out below:

*In 2011 Acer Ward, an in-patient ward for individuals suffering with mental health problems was closed down following an external assessment on a temporary basis and later following a consultation on a permanent basis.*

1. *Could you provide copies of all internal documents, minutes of meeting and discussions (however they may have taken place) from September 2009-September 2011, within NHS Cambridgeshire and with other partners such as Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation NHS Trust, Circle Health or for that matter any others with regard the closure, sustainability or any other aspect of Acer Ward.*

We are keen to be of as much assistance as we can with regards to responding to your request. However, its scope covers a potentially very large number of documents and it is likely that the cost of meeting the request in full, in terms of identifying what information is held, retrieving and extracting what is relevant, would cost more than the appropriate limit specified in the regulations for Primary Care Trust. The appropriate limit is set at £450 which equates to one person spending 2.5 working days on a request. In this instance the PCT is not obligated to respond to the request and can apply an exemption under Section 12 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Therefore I would be grateful if you could be more specific as to the information you are seeking, or the questions you have about this closure, in order that we can supply you with any relevant information that we hold.

In March 2011, as the local NHS commissioners of mental health services, we commenced discussions with the main local NHS provider of mental health services, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust, about our Commissioning Strategy for the next three years. These discussions reviewed current provision, national guidance as to best practice service models, and likely future trends in service provision. From these discussions the local GP commissioning leads and senior clinicians delivering the services developed a range of innovative proposals to significantly re-design local services. Please see the enclosed documents:-

- 1) A copy of the PCT Board Paper dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012 which sets out in detail how we developed the proposals (including the closure of Acer Ward) on which we conducted a public consultation, the feedback we received, and the reasons for the recommendation to the Board that the ward be closed.
- 2) A copy of the "Case for Change" document that supported the public consultation document. This sets out more detailed information about the proposals that we consulted about.

2. *When did the PCT become first aware of the possibility of the closure of Acer ward?*

As above, the PCT entered into discussions with CPFT about a range of ideas for service improvement in March 2011. The proposal to close Acer Ward emerged from these discussions. We collectively decided to seek an external review by the National Clinical Advisory Team to provide assurance about our proposals because of the scale of the changes we would be proposing before commencing public consultation.

3. *Did the PCT investigate why prior to the investigation that advised immediate closure initially on a temporary basis the staffing levels of the unit had become so poor as to render the unit unsafe? Was this investigated by the PCT and if not whose decision was it not to do so. Could documents in relation to this be released?*

We were aware of the failure of a number of recruitment processes to replace staff at Acer Ward who had left the unit to work elsewhere. Once the NCAT review had recommended the immediate closure of the ward on safety grounds, immediate steps were taken to ensure the safety of patients. Please see enclosed a copy of the National Clinical Audit Team report following their visit to Acer Ward.

4. *Could you also provide internal documents pertaining to discussion taken at the PCT to decide the funding of acute services and mental health services in the area?*

The budget allocations for each financial year for each local service are agreed by the PCT Board. A budget report is also presented at each Board meeting. All of these documents are publically available on our website. If you cannot find these, we will be very happy to assist you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely



**Sharon Fox**  
**Trust Board Secretary**

Enc. (3)

1. Copy of the PCT Board Paper dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012
2. Copy of the National Clinical Audit Team report
3. Copy of the "Case for Change" document