Welcome to our 7th edition of GP Brief, a newsletter designed to keep primary care up to date with developments in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

The Corporate Communications Department recently visited all General Practice surgeries to assess the impact of GP Brief and the bi-monthly performance posters.

We have had a good response to GP brief and are keen to continue developing it as a communication channel and would like to receive any ideas for inclusion in future editions.

The Trust is keen to demonstrate that it is an open and accountable organisation. As part of that process we have developed the performance poster which we have circulated to GPs, MLAs, local libraries and supermarkets. The poster contains information on our performance in a range of areas and we are asking Practices to support us in getting this information out.

GPs can also contact the Trust via a dedicated primary care email. If you have a comment, please give us a call or drop an email to gpmedicaldirector@northerntrust.hscni.net.

**Turnaround Team**

There will be a period of transition over the next few months. The Turnaround Team wish to ensure an effective transition to make sure that the considerable progress that has been made is not compromised.

This will be a phased handover commencing with Mary Hinds returning to the PHA on 31 March 2014. The support currently provided by Mark Gillespie and Kevin McMahon will reduce gradually after this time. Paul Cummings is expected to remain until a permanent Chief Executive is recruited.

The recruitment of both a Medical Director and a Chief Executive is a vital next step in the Improvement Plan process.

**The Regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre**

The regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre for Northern Ireland based at Antrim Area Hospital has been accepting referrals since May 2013, providing services and support to over 360 people who have been sexually abused, assaulted or raped. The service is...
available 24/7, 365 days a year and anyone affected by sexual abuse can self-refer by calling 0800 389 4424 or report to the police.

The Rowan is a purpose-built centre which is safe and secure and has highly experienced staff who will work to ensure individuals affected by sexual abuse or violence receive the support or guidance required.

The Centre provides a co-ordinated package of care to promote recovery and wellbeing and, if requested by the service-user, works in collaboration with the Police Service of Northern Ireland to greatly enhance the investigative process. Further information on the service, including details on confidentiality, can be found on The Rowan website at www.therowan.net

The range of services offered at the Rowan includes:
• Forensic medical examination by a specially trained doctor.
• Forensic evidence can be stored until the individual makes a decision whether or not they wish to report to the Police in adult cases;
• Emergency contraception;
• A course of treatment to help prevent the onset of HIV in those who are at risk (this must be administered within 72 hours of the assault);
• Screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections;
• Emotional support;
• Support in making a report to the Police;
• Referral on to counselling and/or other appropriate support services;
• Follow-up support; and
• A 24 hour advice and information line 0800 389 4424.

**Waiting times for urology appointments**

There is a very high demand for urology services within the Northern Trust, which exceeds the clinical capacity available within the urology team. The situation has been further affected by a consultant vacancy, which remains unfilled despite a number of recruitment attempts.

During this challenging time the Trust has had to prioritise patients on the basis of clinical need, with priority given to red flag referrals which are potential cancers and urgent cases. This has resulted in patients referred as routine or requiring a review appointment waiting longer than the Trust would like.

The Trust is currently working with the Health and Social Care Board to resolve the situation.

**Unscheduled Care**

Antrim Area Hospital is continuing to see a marked increase in the number of unscheduled patients being admitted via the emergency department and following assessment in the
Acute Assessment Unit (also known as GP Hub). Waiting times in the emergency department have been impacted and there have been a number of patients who have waited greater than 12 hours for an in-patient bed. During this time patients are seen and assessed by the in-patient team and commence their treatment and care.

It is recognised there is insufficient bed capacity in Antrim Area Hospital for this increased demand. Therefore additional beds, in designated inpatient areas, have opened over the winter period to help with these pressures. Additional staff have been brought in to help in all areas during this difficult period.

Performance at Causeway Hospital Emergency Department has continued to improve with 222 days since a 12 hour breach.

Staff in both acute and community settings continue to work extremely hard to ensure a timely and safe flow of patients across the system.

Greenisland Supported living development

Greenisland Residential Home is due to be replaced with a Supported Living Scheme based on the site where the current home is built. The Trust along with a local stakeholder group and Supporting People have been working to develop a suitable alternative to the current home for the past number of years.

Trinity Housing has been appointed to carry forward the work and there have been meetings held between the Trust and Trinity Housing to progress this. Plans for the supported living facility have been passed. In addition the Trust, along with the stakeholders, has met with Trinity Housing to outline the approximate timescales for the completion of the Project. It is anticipated that the building work will commence during March 2014 and will complete during the 15/16 financial year.

We are currently awaiting the disposal process to be completed at departmental level. Once the land is transferred the preparation work can then be completed i.e. the asbestos survey. In addition we await the outcome of the bat/bird survey which will determine when the build can take place.

The Trust continues to work with stakeholders to ensure they are kept informed on the progress of the build and to seek their views on the plans.

Butterfly Scheme introduced to Causeway Hospital

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust have introduced “The Butterfly Scheme” into Causeway Hospital to improve the well-being and safety of people with memory impairment or dementia.

All staff who come into contact with dementia patients, including hospital porters, housekeeping and professional care staff, are trained in the scheme so that the interaction and support provided to the person with dementia is more consistent.
The scheme was created by a family carer and is already being used in hospitals across England, Scotland and Wales. It allows people with memory impairment and their carers the choice to “opt in”, so that they are empowered to request specific personalised care during their stay in hospital.

Antrim Area Hospital introduced the Butterfly Scheme in October last year and has had significant success with the scheme. The Northern Trust is the first Health Trust in Northern Ireland to have the Butterfly Scheme in operation in both its acute hospitals.

**Condition Management Programme for those with ME**

A pilot programme has just started in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust offering a condition management programme (CMP) for patients with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (M.E). The pilot is available to all patients across the Northern Trust area and will involve 12 sessions with three and six month follow ups. It is the first condition-specific project available to patients to assist them in the self-management of their condition.

M.E is a condition that affects all areas of a person’s life, and can mean their activities are severely limited. The programme will help people to gain the fine balance between rest and activity, which has been shown to assist in recovery from this complex condition.

A Health Care Practitioner will meet with the patient to find out what support they need and to develop an individually tailored plan with set goals to help them manage their condition and start on the road to recovery. As a result, many patients have been able to return to employment or training.

Anyone interested in the programme should speak to their GP who can then make a referral for them.

**Service directories available**

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has launched a palliative care information booklet and a new updated carers A-Z directory for patients and their families.

The palliative care booklet provides information on services which can help patients while they are in hospital or living at home. Palliative care is available to people whose illness can no longer be cured. It seeks to help to achieve the best quality of life for people with advanced, life-threatening diseases such as cancer, heart or lung disease, kidney failure and other conditions like motor neurone disease and multiple sclerosis.

The updated Carers A-Z Directory has also been launched and will support carers in their role by indicating what help is available to them. The directory details information about support services provided within the Northern Trust and through external organisations.

The booklet was compiled in partnership with Carers NI, and will be distributed throughout the Trust Health and Social Care Teams, GP practices and community/voluntary
organisations.

For copies of both booklets:
Palliative care information booklet – Please download from the Northern Trust website www.northerntrust.hscni.net
A-Z for Carers – Call 028 2766 1392 or email anne.cummings@northerntrust.hscni.net.

Infection prevention and control

It is the vision of the Northern Trust that patients, staff and the Board work together to prevent and control infections to ensure that no one acquires an avoidable health care associated infection whilst receiving care and treatment.

The 2012/15 Infection Prevention and Control Strategy describes the eight key themes to support staff and the Trust in meeting the current and future demands for quality standards by minimising risk and integrating infection prevention and control into core business.

Themes include; patient experience; clean, safe environments; communications; culture; leadership; workforce/education; assurance; and antimicrobial stewardship.

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