

Trust Board Briefing Paper

From: Roy Hamill, Director of Community Care

To: Trust Board Members

Date: 14th January 2022

Subject:

Fort Centre Refurbishment for Community Occupational Therapy Services

Action Required:

Review and approve allocation of capital funding of £290k to meet cost of the refurbishment of the Fort Centre for community based OT Services.

Purpose:

Occupational Therapists typically undertake functional assessments to determine a person's ability to carry out their normal occupations and activities of daily living including personal care and household tasks. These assessments also take into account the person's interface with their environment.

Activities of daily living, which impact on individual user's independence and quality of life, and assessed within the Fort Centre clinic include personal care, mobility, transfers from bed, chair, bath and WC, ability to manage stairs. In addition, general advice around equipment and adaptations to the home, cognitive and perceptual screening are also available within this clinic facility. The Northern Trust Occupational Therapy Wheelchair service also operates a satellite clinic from the Fort Centre. At the centre assessment of complex needs are carried out in partnership with regional partners and suppliers to determine which wheelchair would best meet both adult users and children's individual needs.

The current assessment clinic lacks functionality in its lay out and lacks storage space required to facilitate issue of equipment after assessment, thus requiring delivery at a later date by support staff. There is no main assessment room, where all the required assessment equipment can be located and no dedicated 'dirty' store for users to leave the wheelchairs and other items that have been replaced or returned.

Background:

This proposal will assist the Trust in meeting the key strategic objectives highlighted in Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering together, by promoting the prevention agenda in supporting everyone to lead long, healthy and active lives. As well as the policy context the Trust also has a statutory duty under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (NI) Act, 1978 to make provision of such equipment within a reasonable timeframe following the identification of an assessed need. The Department of Health target associated with such provision includes a responsibility to install all lifts and overhead tracking hoists within 16 weeks of the identified need as assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT).

The enhanced facilities proposed will facilitate the space required, greatly improving the service user experience in terms of confidentiality, adequate space to manoeuvre in wheelchair and a more positive assessment experience in appropriate surroundings. In addition the staff will effectively benefit from a dedicated assessment space which will help facilitate a quality clinical intervention in terms of appropriate prescription and set-up, aiming to ensure best use of resources, professional time and value for money.

The upgraded assessment clinic will include a mock kitchen, bathroom and bedroom as well as a lift to enable those with mobility issues to access the clinic. The upgrade will result in an increase in the number of assessments taking place in the clinics thus reducing the number of home visits. The service users - who can be assessed within a clinic - will benefit from improved facilities as well as receiving their full assessment within the clinic setting. The addition of kitchen facilities for the staff will provide an improved working environment for staff, the communal kitchen will invest in team health and wellbeing.

Progress to date:

Tender exercise has resulted in a total build cost of £290k which is £50k more than was originally approved.

Conclusion:

By approving the business case the refurbishment will improve existing facilities in Causeway locality to maximise the availability of OT and Wheelchair Service clinics whilst also improving the service user experience as a result of improved facility layout.