

## **ELIMINATING MIXED-SEX ACCOMMODATION (EMSA) DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE 2021/22**

**Harrogate District NHS Foundation Trust is able to confirm that mixed sex accommodation has been virtually eliminated in all of its hospitals.**

Every patient has the right to receive high quality care that is safe, effective and respects their privacy and dignity. Harrogate District NHS Foundation Trust is committed to providing every patient with same gender accommodation to help safeguard their privacy and dignity when they are often at their most vulnerable.

The Trust is able to confirm that mixed gender accommodation has been virtually eliminated in the Trust. Apart from a few exceptions for clinically justifiable reasons, patients who are admitted to any of our hospitals will only share the room where they sleep with people of the same gender. In addition, same gender toilets and bathing facilities will be as close to their bed area as possible.

Wards within the Trust are grouped according to their clinical specialties. This allows patients with similar conditions to be cared for in one area with staff that are experienced in this type of care. This means that men and women may be on the same ward but will not share sleeping, bathing or toilet facilities.

There are some exceptions to this. Sharing with people of the opposite gender will happen sometimes. This will only happen by exception and will be based on clinical need in areas such as intensive/critical care units, emergency care areas and some high observation bays. In these instances, every effort will be made to rectify the situation as soon as is reasonably practicable and staff will take extra care to ensure that the privacy and dignity of patients and service users is maintained.

### **How well are we doing in meeting these standards?**

The Trust has made physical changes to many inpatient accommodation areas to provide privacy screening/partitioning and additional toilet and bathing facilities. Toilet and bathroom signage has also been improved and this work continues. New ward accommodation that has been built in the last 12 months has maintained single-sex standards.

The Trust is required to report any breaches of the Eliminating Mixed Sex Accommodation (EMSA) standards to its commissioners. The Trust can be subject to a financial penalty of £250 for each of these breaches. In 2021/22, there were no breaches of these standards.

The Trust has not received any contacts through its Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) or any formal complaints relating to mixed sex accommodation concerns during 2021/22.

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND SERVICE USERS

### **‘Same gender-accommodation’ means:**

- The room where your bed is will only have patients of the same gender as you, and;
- 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 male and female patients on the ward but, apart from a few exceptions for clinically-justifiable reasons such as in intensive care or high dependency areas, 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 sleeping areas that are designated for people of the opposite gender to you. 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 (e.g. on your way to X-ray or the operating theatre).

Also, it is most likely that visitors of the opposite gender will come into the room where your bed is, and this may include patients visiting one other. It is almost certain that both male and female nurses, doctors and other staff will come into your bed space/area.

If you need help to use the toilet or take a bath that requires special equipment to help secure your care and safety (e.g. you need a hoist or special bath), then you may be taken to a “unisex” bathroom used by both men and women, but a member of staff will be with you, and other patients will not be in the bathroom at the same time as you.

The NHS and the Trust will not turn patients away just because a “right-gender” bed is not immediately available for them. The patient’s clinical need(s) will always take precedence.

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

If you think you are in mixed accommodation and shouldn’t be then please speak with the nurse in charge of the ward or area. This will be taken extremely seriously by staff and action will be taken to explain the reasons behind this and assurance will be provided that you will be moved to a same gender area/bay as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Thank you.

Signed: Sarah Armstrong, Chair and Jonathan Coulter, Chief Executive  
May 2022