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Staff shortage forces temporary closure of inpatient ward at Bromyard Community Hospital

A shortage of nurses has forced Wye Valley NHS Trust to temporarily close the inpatient ward at Bromyard Community Hospital, which will take effect no later than Friday September 11.

Health bosses at the Trust have taken the decision on patient safety grounds - however, they have vowed to revisit the decision in three months time and will re-open the ward as soon as possible if staff levels pick up.

“This is not a position we would want to find ourselves in,” said Richard Beeken, WVT chief executive.

“However, it is symptomatic of the staff shortage faced by NHS Trusts right across the country. The situation is made worse in Herefordshire due to the rurality of the county which means it does not have the ‘big city’ appeal many of the bigger hospitals have.

“All NHS Trusts are trying to recruit out of the same small pool of nurses - this is a national issue. Unfortunately, despite a number of successful recruitment campaigns, we are still short of qualified nurses.

Richard stressed that no patients had been harmed due to the staff shortage at Bromyard Community Hospital and added that as a responsible organisation, it had a responsibility to ensure its patients continued to receive the safest care possible.

“We’re sure patients would rather have safe care in Hereford County Hospital than be at potential risk of harm in an understaffed Bromyard Community Hospital.

“The impact on local people will be minimal, as the 14-bedded inpatient ward is used predominantly for step-down care for patients following acute admission at Hereford County Hospital.

“We still have a community hospital in the north of the county, at Leominster, and the full range of outpatient clinics will continue to run at Bromyard Community as normal,” added Richard.

The decision by the Trust has been made in advance discussion with its commissioners.

“Our priority now is to support those patients who are currently at the hospital and to make sure they continue to receive the care and treatment they require.

“Our recruitment campaigns continue and we shall reopen the ward as soon as we feel it is safe to do so,” added Richard.

Ends

Note to editors:
- Wye Valley NHS Trust is the provider health services across Herefordshire and beyond. The Trust exists to improve the wellbeing, independence and health of the people we serve. We are the leading provider of health care in Herefordshire.
- By working closely with our partners, we can make good our promise to deliver a quality of care we would want for ourselves, our families and our friends.
- With an estimated annual turnover of around £160 million, we employ around 2,700 plus staff. We aim to build new relationships between our staff, patients, service users and their carers with the wider community.

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