

PE1471/J

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Public Petitions Committee
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Our Ref RMC/PB
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Dear Mr Howlett

Consideration of Petition PE1471

Young People within NHS Grampian are considered to be a complex client group given their need to be seen as adults yet requiring reassurance and support in much greater amounts from their families at times of change, stress and illness.

In order to limit the exposure that this age group have to inappropriate experiences of healthcare by being cared for in adult based wards where the atmosphere is often sombre with little opportunity for the patient to relate to anyone of a similar age range NHS Grampian has been the first Children's Hospital to increase the age range of patients cared for in the Children's Hospital.

This has not been without its problems as we have had to adapt a number of areas to ensure that young people are now not cared for in an environment that is too juvenile for them. A number of young people were asked which area they would prefer to be cared for in and most responded that they would like to be in a bay that had people of the same age group in rather than being in the isolation of a cubicle. Whilst this causes some issues in regard to patient placement it is achieved by forward planning as much as possible.

Our physical environment is organised so that the very young (five and under) are, where possible, cared for separately to the young people thirteen and over.

At present we do not have any permanent members of staff who are Learning Disability or Mental Health trained however we work in collaboration with our colleagues to offer local based training for nurses caring for this group of patients, this is particularly relevant for staff within Accident and Emergency who are facing increasing numbers of young people with Mental Health issues and substance misuse.

In addition ARCHIE our local charity for Child Health in Grampian is currently planning, as part of a 10 year upgrade, to enhance the service provision to the teenage group by giving

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them their own sitting room where they can make their own drinks and food as they require in addition to giving them greater access to social networking sites and wifi to interact with friends and family at home.

The Play Team are an integral part of this age group's occupation whilst in hospital and should be seen very much as a provider of occupational activities rather than, as their name suggests, "play".

Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital (RACH) is working hard to ensure that the care the young people of Grampian receive is targeted appropriately and through patient feedback of their experience we are constantly adapting to requests.

RACH was built with adolescent care delivery in mind. We are still in the infancy of delivering this care to this age group and still have much to learn, however for a number of years we have delivered care to a number of patients up to their late teens and early twenties and will continue to do so for specific patient groups, such as oncology and learning disability. There is no intention at this time to deliver care up to 21 for all young people.

We have an excellent environment at RACH and would be happy to work with any groups in the future to look at the expansion of service and consider the implications on both medical and nursing staffing. Clearly any discrete unit would not need to be placed in the Children's Hospital but would need to be a specific unit standing separate from any other inpatient area. In order to determine unit size there would need to be a scoping exercise conducted to identify patient numbers and therefore unit size.

Yours sincerely

Richard M Carey
Chief Executive