

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF SMOKERS AT ENTRANCES

Report of the Director of Communications

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Board of action being taken to address the continuous problem of patients and visitors smoking outside the hospital entrances.

2. Background and problem

In August 2007 the Trust introduced a challenging policy – no smoking anywhere on the site by staff, patients or visitors. This ban included all hospital buildings (national policy) and grounds stretching across the whole campus (Trust decision).

A comprehensive awareness campaign accompanied the new policy – briefings for staff, posters, banners, signs, press, website, patient letters, talking signs and staff patrols – to ensure compliance with the new ruling and to encourage people to seek help to quit.

Staff compliance has been good but it has been difficult to stop patients and visitors from smoking outside the buildings, many of whom congregate at the main entrance. This sends out a message to others that smoking is tolerated on the site.

Clearly it is important to recognise that for many people a visit to the hospital can be a very stressful time, whether they are receiving treatment themselves or are distressed about a loved one. While the Trust needs to ensure compliance of the smoke-free policy it also wants to be sensitive and show consideration to people during times of stress.

3. Action

The directors have given considerable thought to this situation and a number of proposals are being considered.

- Firstly, a covered external shelter will be positioned at the concourse rear entrance to tackle the very real problem of patients and visitors needing somewhere to smoke – this will hopefully move people away from the entrances while giving them some form of shelter from the elements.
- The site will continue to be promoted as ‘smoke-free’ but will include the rider ‘with the exception of designated external smoking areas’.
- Discussions will continue with staff, and views of patients and public sought, in order to gain suggestions for on-going management and improvement of the situation.
- Dependant on the outcome of discussions with staff ...
 - additional external shelters will be positioned around the site if required;
 - the policy for staff will be reviewed with the proposal that staff be allowed to smoke in these new designated areas.

4. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the content of this report and the action being taken.

Ruth St John-Murphy
Director of Communications
8 September 2008