

## **Cancer Services Partnership**

### **Observational visit by Frankie Webb and Peter Humphreys to the Radiotherapy Unit on the Basingstoke Hospital site 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 6 July 2017.**

#### **1. Introduction**

This visit was planned a few months ago and kindly facilitated by Holly Hall, the Manager of the Radiotherapy Unit. It is a part of a series of observational visits to cancer treatment facilities of the Hampshire Hospital Foundation Trust. Visits to the Basing Unit and the Nick Jonas Ward have already been undertaken and reported on. Visits to the Wessex Ward and Andover Memorial Hospital are arranged. Only a visit to the Mobile Chemo Van has yet to be arranged.

#### **2. Radiotherapy Unit (RU) location and parking**

The RU is located on the hospital ring road on the opposite side of the hospital to the main reception. It is directly opposite the Arc centre and shares a site with the Candover Facility. It is well signposted from the main entrance and the queue for the main hospital visitor's car park can be avoided completely. The car park entrance has a barrier and one presses a button and a voice comes on saying Candover Centre. They immediately opened the gate when told the visit was for the RU. The first part of the car park was for the Candover Centre and then for the RU, in front of the RU building. There were plenty of free spaces and it was easy to park. This was really excellent.

This is a complete contrast to the main hospital parking and that of Winchester, where parking can be a bigger cause of stress than the treatments.

#### **3. Reception areas**

Reception is a largish open plan area, bright, uncluttered, spacious and decorated in pastel colours with green standing out. The atmosphere and ambience was welcoming and relaxed. There were several comfortable arm chairs and a settee. There was a manned reception desk with a welcoming person on it. Also in the reception area were information leaflets, many on wall racks. These looked like the Macmillan publication series. These were neatly laid out and there was some further information material on the receptionist's desk. It turned out that this was the reception area for first appointments rather than those waiting for their treatments.

This is the best hospital reception area we had seen anywhere. After a short wait we were greeted by a member of the RU staff, Jo Hillyer, who was kind enough to show us around.

We then walked a very short distance to a further reception area. This was for those waiting for their treatment. This was also very comfortable, with good chairs. It had a coffee/tea machine using pods inserted into it, so each drink is freshly made, for a

small cost of 50p. Whilst we didn't get to sample it, our experience with this type of machine is good.

#### **4. Changing facilities**

There were three private changing rooms. Each had a locker that patients could put their valuables in and retain the key. They then came out through a door on the other side in their gown. This ensured they weren't seen by the public in their gowns and only by RU staff. This again was excellent design and well thought through. People are very understandably reluctant to be seen in any state of undress in public.

#### **5. CT scanner.**

We were shown the CT scanner which was also used by the Candover Unit and on occasions other hospital departments when the hospital CT scanner was under pressure. This was situated in a pleasant light room. It had an unusual ceiling, with backlit panels showing a leafy scene. It was a good design feature and broke up what could otherwise have been just a sterile room. This type of ceiling is normally just seen in up-market Chinese restaurants in North America.

#### **6. Radiotherapy machine**

We were shown the machine itself. We were surprised to be told just how short the average appointment time is of ten minutes and the average treatment time on the machine is two minutes. The majority of cancers treated here are breast and prostate, with some palliative. The unit didn't do mixed chemo/radiotherapy treatment or head and necks. We were told that there was a high degree of machine reliability and that there had only been one breakdown, which had been this year, when patients had been accompanied down to Southampton.

We were told that 75% of all breast and prostate radiotherapy for the Basingstoke and Andover areas was carried out in Basingstoke and about 40% of prostate and breast treatments for the Winchester area, being mainly those from the northern part of that area.

#### **7. General points**

Holly Hall the RU Manager joined Jo, Frankie and Peter for the general discussion at the conclusion of the visit.

We were told that family members or carers accompanying patients were welcome and could stay with the patient apart from the CT scanner and radiotherapy machine areas.

There seemed sufficient work areas for staff and there was no evidence of staff work stations sharing patient space as happens in the Basing Unit.

The patients/family members/carers we saw on our visit seemed relaxed and cheerful, again a contrast with the Basing Unit.

On average the RU treats about 40 patients a day.

Patients are referred to the RU by oncologists based in the Basing Unit on F floor of the main hospital block, and in the Nick Jonas Ward. They are assessed by the RU and a treatment plan produced for approval and sign off by the oncologist. The RU work to national NHS standards, the 'Gold standards'.

Excellent air conditioning was operating throughout the building.

## **8. Summary**

The RU seemed to us to be an excellent, well managed unit providing an essential service to those living in North Hampshire. A combination of a well designed and fitted out building, managed and operated by good staff has produced a centre of excellence for the hospital trust.

Our grateful thanks to Holly Hall and Jo Hillyer for our visit.

The opinions and judgements expressed in this report are entirely ours and not necessarily representative of the views hospital management, any of its staff or other members of the Cancer Services Partnership. The responsibility for any errors or omissions is entirely ours.

Frankie Webb - Chair  
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NHS HHFT Cancer Services Partnership  
6 July 2017