Outpatient Clinic Policy
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Outpatients Policy

B. Rationale
Ellern Mede runs specialist eating disorder hospitals treating both NHS and private patients with complex and challenging eating disorders. Ellern Mede Ridgeway hospital is a 26-bed hospital for children and adolescents, registered with, and regulated by, the CQC. The CQC has agreed to Ellern Mede Ridgeway expanding its services to offer as a ‘satellite’ service, an Outpatient Clinic staffed by Ellern Mede clinicians. Central and Greater London as well as in other parts of the UK and beyond need more eating disorder services, in particular linked inpatient / outpatient pathways. This supports patients in the community, pre-admission and post discharge which are times of transition. Research is evidencing that in areas of good outpatient care being available for eating disorder patients this also reduces the number of inpatient admissions.

Outpatient support is a way to give:
- faster access to treatment, and
- to maintain people in the community.

Ellern Mede is also at an advanced stage of developing a second inpatient service in Barnet, London.

The London Outpatient Clinics complete a care pathway for the existing services of Ellern Mede Ridgeway and the soon-to-launch Ellern Mede Barnet hospital. A dedicated clinical team will be able to follow the patient throughout their pathway, a ‘wrap around’ care package whether as an inpatient or an outpatient.

The services are delivered on two separate sites in Harley Street and Wimpole Street, by Ellern Mede consultant psychiatrists with the support, as required, of members of the multidisciplinary team.

All existing Ellern Mede governance, compliance, training and administration resources and policies support the satellite clinic.

This Policy ensures a co-ordinated approach to the management of outpatient services and incorporates the management of referrals, waiting lists, appointment booking, cancellations, Did Not Attends (DNAs), validation and a service description.
THE POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 Ellern Mede Outpatient Clinic is a specialist eating disorder clinic which accepts referrals on a private basis or from the NHS (where funding is agreed), for those experiencing eating disorder related difficulties. The clinic offers assessment, advice, treatment and ongoing management of all conditions associated with eating disorders. The clinic provides access to consultant psychiatrist specialists, psychologists, dieticians, systemic and family therapists and associated medical services such as phlebotomy (blood tests) and clinical investigations.

1.2 Aims of the Service — The service aims to provide a high quality, customer focused outpatient treatment service for individuals experiencing eating disorders and associated health problems.

1.3 Scope of the Service — The clinic will accept appropriate referrals for eating disorder and food related illnesses and associated complications, on a private basis, or funded by the NHS. Treatment for patients can be funded in several ways, including, self-pay, insurance, trust fund, family member, NHS or charity. Where relevant the clinic will liaise with local CAMHS services, community mental health teams and other stakeholders I clinicians as appropriate and where consent to do so has been confirmed.

2. Operation

2.1 Patients are defined as being on an Outpatient Waiting List when, following Ellern Mede’s acceptance of a self or professional referral, they are awaiting their first consultation. Wherever possible, patients will be issued with an appointment within two weeks of acceptance of the referral. Urgent cases will be given the first available urgent appointment.

2.2 Hours of service – The clinic will operate by appointment which may include weekend or evening appointments.

2.3 Staffing – The building in which the clinic operates has a permanently staffed reception service and appointments will be with a registered Ellern Mede senior healthcare professional, usually a consultant psychiatrist, who will also arrange appointments for the patient as required with other professionals such as a therapist and dietitian.

2.4 Environmental Requirements – All areas of the consulting rooms utilised by Ellern Mede will be clean and clear of clutter at all times. Lighting and heating is checked regularly and an ambient temperature is maintained by the building management. Seating is easily accessible and any information boards or leaflets relating to Ellern Mede will be current. Hand gel is available in the Ellern Mede Clinic for use by visiting patients.

2.5 Medical Records security – All patient related information is managed confidentially. No
patient records are left in the clinic following appointments. During appointment times, any patient records in the possession of the health professional are stored in a locked drawer. After each clinic session closes for the day, all files are transferred by the health professional to the main Ellern Mede Ridgeway hospital site for secure storage. Patients have the right to request copies of, or access to, their patient records. This is detailed in Ellern Mede Ridgeway Access to Records Policy.

2.6 Manual Handling – All personnel employed to provide care at the Ellern Mede Outpatient Clinic are trained in manual handling as part of their Statutory and Mandatory training. Training records are kept at the main Ellern Mede Ridgeway site.

2.7 Fire Safety – The two sites at which Ellern Mede Clinic appointments take place have valid Fire Safety Policies and regulation. Ellern Mede personnel are all trained in Fire Safety as part of Mandatory Training.

2.8 Training and Education – All clinic personnel are registered professionals and follow the requirements of their professional bodies in regard to training, Continuous Professional Development (CPD), appraisal, supervision and revalidation. Ellern Mede offers in-house CPD as well as access to external professional training relating to eating disorders and healthcare.

2.9 Complaints – The Ellern Mede Complaints Procedure is available within the clinic for patients and visitors. We aim to provide the highest standards of service to our clientele but recognise that on occasions, things do go wrong. We work collaboratively with complainants and all complaints are handled in line with Ellern Mede’s corporate policies and procedures. All complaints are investigated and a written response will follow any formal complaint.

2.10 Security (staff and patients) – All Ellern Mede personnel have undertaken Promoting Safer Therapeutic Services Training (PSTS) and Breakaway Skills Training, including de-escalation techniques. If Ellern Mede personnel, patients or visitors experience any difficulties with safety or security whilst in a clinic session, local police will always be called. Ellern Mede’s corporate policy on Lone Working covers staff working within the clinic.

2.11 Facilities – The consulting rooms offer access to toilet and washing facilities for patients, visitors and clinic personnel. Facilities are available to make hot and cold drinks.

2.12 Equipment Requirements – Landline telephone for appointments is at Ellern Mede corporate head office and there is also a manned receptionist service at the Consulting Room which can transfer calls to Ellern Mede clinicians. Consultants and therapists seeing patients, at the consulting room will have access to a mobile phone, a landline, a laptop PC with Wi-Fi capability, electronic weighing scales, height scales, Ophthalmoscope, Patella hammer, Tuning fork, Stethoscope, and Blood pressure monitors. Doppler ultrasound testing or phlebotomy or other specialist testing will be arranged using facilities external to the Outpatient Consultation.
2.13 Infection Prevention and Control – The clinic is delivered in accordance with the Ellern Mede corporate Infection Control Policy and procedures.

2.14 Responsibilities – The attending clinician is responsible for the delivery of the safe operating of Ellern Mede Clinic Outpatient Consultations. The clinic is a satellite of the Ellern Mede Ridgeway Hospital, therefore the Registered Manager for Ellern Mede Ridgeway is also responsible for Ellern Mede Outpatient Clinic. The Ellern Mede Ridgeway Clinical Director is responsible for all Ellern Mede Outpatient Clinic activity.

3. Key Principles

3.1 Data held is timely, accurate and complete.

3.2 Data held is subject to regular audit and validation.

3.3 Communication with patients/parents is informative, clear and concise.

3.4 The consultant or their representative prioritises all referrals.

3.5 Outpatient referrals, appointments and waiting lists are managed by clinical priority and then by date of referral.

3.6 Appropriate training programmes support all staff with special regard paid to newly recruited staff.

3.7 The process of outpatient waiting list management is transparent to the public.

3.8 Patients have a responsibility to keep their appointment provided reasonable notice has been given.

4. Referrals and Enquiries

4.1 All enquiries are logged and recorded into a Database for consideration.

4.2 Accepted patient referrals are recorded onto the database within one working day of receipt.

4.3 The date of acceptance of a referral is not amended for any reason.

4.4 The original Private or NHS Referral Form is copied and filed in the paper Patient Health Record and handed to a more responsible consultant psychiatrist within one working day of acceptance and receipt of the referral form.

4.5 The consultant will assign a priority-level for the client appointment based on the information received within the referral letter and supplementary information available prior to face to face assessment. Where required, an assessment consultation will be arranged according to the priority of the case.

4.6 A letter confirming acceptance of the patient for assessment or consultation will be either emailed or posted to the patient within one working day of an appointment being agreed.
5. Appointment Booking

5.1 Urgent – The clinic operates an urgent appointment availability process. All urgent cases will be offered the next available urgent appointment.

5.2 Routine – The clinic will aim to schedule all routine appointments within 4 weeks of acceptance of patient and receipt of referral form.

5.2.1 The Ellern Mede Referral Team will call the patient (or parent in the case of a minor) to arrange appointments for the Ellern Mede Outpatient Clinic. If, following acceptance of a patient referral it has not been possible for the Ellern Mede Referral Team to arrange an appointment, the team will send a letter within 5 working days of acceptance, asking the patient to call the referral team to agree an Outpatient appointment.

5.2.2 If the patient fails to contact the team within 14 days a reminder letter is sent.

5.2.3 If the patient fails to contact the team within a further 14 days the patient is removed from the waiting list and the relevant parties informed (consultant, healthcare specialist, GP insurance provider)

5.3 Follow-ups – Following the first appointment, the next appointment will be agreed by the treating clinician and added to the Appointment Schedule. If the appointment is more than 7 days hence, a confirmation letter will be sent the next working day to the previous appointment.

5.4 Collection of patient demographic details – All referrals will result in the clinic collecting and recording demographic data. This will include: the patient's name, address, telephone number and contact details, GP, NHS number if relevant, ethnic origin, next of kin and non-UK information. In addition, payment preference and payment details will be taken (eg. self-pay, insurance, trust fund, bill-payer details).

5.5 If the patient is insured, membership number and an Insurer's authorisation will be required in advance of the consultation.

6. Patient Cancellations and Did Not Attends (DNAs)

6.1 Once an appointment has been agreed by the patient, the patient has a responsibility to attend that appointment.

6.2 Patient Cancellation – The patient may cancel their appointment more than 48 hours before the date free of charge. If less than 48 hours notice is given (emergencies notwithstanding) Ellern Mede retains the right to require payment of 50% of the consultation fee and if less than 24 hours, the full consultation fee.

6.3 If a patient phones to cancel their appointment in the accepted time limit, a new date at a mutually convenient date and time is allocated to the patient and entered onto the Appointment Schedule.
6.4 If a patient cancels their appointment for a second time and the reason given is not considered to be valid, the consultant retains the right to review the acceptance of the referral. A decision will then be made whether to offer another appointment or to discharge the patient, confirming this with all relevant parties.

6.5 If a patient fails to attend for 2 consecutive appointments without communicating this with the clinic (DNAs), the patient will be removed from the list and all relevant parties will be informed.

7. Appointment cancellations by the clinic

7.1 Every effort is made to ensure that appointments run on schedule and with the relevant consultants/healthcare professionals present. There are exceptional circumstances where cancellations are unavoidable such as accident, sickness, access to the consulting rooms.

7.2 In the event of an unavoidable cancellation, Ellern Mede administrative personnel will telephone all patients scheduled for an appointment and offer a mutually agreed alternative.

7.3 Where cancellations are initiated by the clinic, patients should be offered an alternative date as close to their original appointment date as possible.

7.4 If a Clinic Appointment is cancelled more than twice within a 6 month period, the Ellern Mede Chief Executive Officer will convene a meeting with all professionals involved in the delivery of the clinic to identify solutions going forward.

8. Discharge of Outpatients

The Ellern Mede Outpatient Clinic Lead Consultant may discharge referred patients:

8.1 At the patient’s request
8.2 If they have failed to attend appointments as described above
8.3 If all reasonable attempts to contact the patient are unsuccessful
8.4 At the request of the lead healthcare professional should the appointment become unnecessary or inappropriate, given the patient's condition or presentation
8.5 If the patient or any accompanying person becomes violent / abusive or aggressive to Ellern Mede staff
8.6 If there is a failure to pay for healthcare treatment or consultations provided

If a patient is discharged for any of the above reasons then all relevant parties will be notified within 10 working days.

9. Validation of referrals

9.1 All referrals or applications for treatment will be subject to assessment, review and consideration by an assigned Ellern Mede Consultant.
9.2 The assigned Consultant will request any further clinical information that is required in order to review the referral or application for treatment. This will be requested from relevant parties.

10. **Annual Leave and Study Leave for personnel employed for the Ellern Mede Outpatient Clinic**

10.1 All requests for Ellern Mede Outpatient Clinic staff to take Annual Leave or Study Leave must be approved four weeks before the leave is due to be taken (notwithstanding emergencies).

10.2 Clinics that require cancellation as a result of Annual or Study Leave with less than four weeks' notice will require written approval by the Ellern Mede CEO.

11. **Service Success Criteria**

11.1 Notwithstanding emergencies, all Outpatient appointments will run as planned and be delivered on time.

11.2 Ellern Mede will confirm all Outpatient appointments in writing (either email or letter).

11.3 All written communications will contain Ellern Mede Outpatient Contact Telephone numbers and a Map showing the location of the appointment.

11.4 All patients should be asked at time of making the appointment about any special requirements, for example relating to disabled access, sight or hearing impairment, language translation or any other type of additional support required.

11.5 All patients will be informed prior to the Outpatient Appointment if an additional professional may be present at the consultation.

11.6 If it is likely that clinical investigations are required, written Patient Consent will always be requested for adult patients and written Parental Consent for patients under the age of 18.

11.7 Notwithstanding emergencies, clinical consultations should be uninterrupted.

11.8 All patients will be given the opportunity to give feedback regarding their experience of attending the clinic appointment(s) and if they have any suggestions for improvement.

12. **Policies**

12.1 The Ellern Mede Outpatient Clinic adheres to Policies specific to the Consulting Rooms in which the clinic appointment is delivered.

12.2 Clinicians delivering the clinic appointment are subject to Ellern Mede corporate hospital policy framework as the clinic is a satellite service.