

Developments in Bristol paediatrics (May 2007).

Dr. Timothy Chambers.

The last 6 weeks have seen the commissioning and opening of three exciting projects in specialist medical care of children and young people.

First, the Seashore Centre at Weston-super-Mare General Hospital.

This is an innovatory service which provides child centred out patient facilities with an adjoining ward area for assessment and treatment of acute illness not sufficiently serious to need transfer to Bristol Children's Hospital. There are no overnight stays. The service is staffed by three Weston based paediatricians with their paediatric nursing colleagues, secretaries and other staff. The décor is child friendly and comments of patients and parents have been overwhelmingly positive. It seems to be achieving its aim of providing local secondary acute and out patient paediatric care for a population which previously had to journey to Bristol. The service was inaugurated in April by Dr Sheila Shribman, the national clinical director for maternity and children's services. Congratulations to the Weston Trust, North Somerset PCT, the Weston Hospital League of Friends and the local public for a fine investment in child health. View the service on:-

http://www.waht.nhs.uk/Departments/Childrens_Services/default.htm

Second, the Children's Hospice at Charlton Farm, Wraxall (www.chsw.org.uk).

There are said to be more than 1000 children in the south-west with a life limiting or life threatening condition (eg Duchenne muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis) . A charity, Children's Hospice Southwest, opened its first hospice in Barnstable in 1995. In April 2007 a second hospice was opened at Wraxall, North Somerset —Charlton Farm. The new hospice has been built in converted farm buildings set in 150 acres of Green Belt pastureland. The new facility will allow about 200 families to have a break/holiday and will provide skilled nursing and general care so that the family have some respite. Both the buildings and the setting are stunning. We hope to publish further details later.

Third, the new acute secondary children's ward (38) at the Bristol Children's hospital (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/bristol/6573703.stm>)

This is the ward and office area which replaces the Woodland unit at Southmead Hospital which is now closed. The Neonatal Intensive care unit remains there. (It was a poignant coincidence that this happened in the months that two former distinguished Southmead paediatricians died: Dr Beryl Corner and Professor Neville Butler:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/03/20/db2001.xml>

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article1572751.ece>

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article1599622.ece>)

The woodland theme is not lost – a pleasant shrubbery has been planted adjacent to Horfield Road and the names of the two Southmead wards, Badger and Otter, preserved on the welcoming ward entrance plaque. The Trust has done us proud with magnificent clinical facilities and the patients and parents with ensuite single rooms in a delicately curved and subtly lighted ward whose décor is as child orientated as the rest of the Children's Hospital. We now have to make the reinforced general paediatrics at BCH work. There is no

Southmead to take transfers when beds are full and we do not wish to stretch our neighbouring paediatric units, particularly during the winter respiratory infection period. A consultant run attending service and rapid access, triage, sorting service should do this. The Trust has made us most welcome – the Head of Division Dr Jacky Cornish was on hand distributing goodies at the busy time of the move – and it is a pleasure to be working in an institute which can now truly live up to its name – Bristol Royal Children’s Hospital.

The Bristol and Weston-super-Mare paediatricians and other clinicians who work with children and young people are grateful for the commitment from the Trusts and the Hospice to help them provide 21st century care for their patients. Two pieces of jigsaw remain to be placed: the move of specialist surgical services from Frenchay Hospital and – in the opinion of this author - the provision of a level 3 (highest care) NICU at the Children’s Hospital.

Timothy Chambers
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