

## **Wellbeing Policy and Development Panel – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

### **Title: Provision of Hydrotherapy services**

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the Hydrotherapy services provided across Bath and North East Somerset.

#### **2. What is Hydrotherapy**

Hydrotherapy is the use of water in the treatment of different conditions, including arthritis and related rheumatic complaints.

Hydrotherapy is also used as an exercise medium, and is often used by people who have physical disabilities; it offers people an opportunity for independent activity which would not be possible without the support of the water. Specialist Hydrotherapy pools have a higher water temperature than public swimming pools (as people with physical disabilities have reduced levels of activity) and have a range of equipment to enable easy access such as hoists and wider steps. Changing facilities are larger and include grab rails and adjustable height changing beds.

Hydrotherapy treatments are most usually provided as part of a planned physiotherapy regime and will be undertaken under the supervision of a physiotherapist or physiotherapy assistant.

#### **3. Commissioning of Hydrotherapy services – Bath and North East Somerset**

NHS Bath and North East Somerset CCG commissions hydrotherapy services through its therapies contracts with the RUH and RNHRD, and these services are used extensively by a wide range of service users/patients. Referral to these services is through the physiotherapy service and referrals are also accepted from Consultants and GP's. In addition some sessions are available for booking from external providers – for example Sirona Care and Health have booked sessions at the RUH for adults with learning disabilities; Bath BMI clinic have a regular booking at RNHRD.

There are 3 further specialist Hydrotherapy pools located at Fosseyway school, Radstock; Three Ways school, Bath; Bath University; these are not subject to any commissioning or contracting agreement with the CCG. These services are used primarily by the pupils and students of each establishment, but sessions are also made available to outside agencies, and all currently have external bookings for use.

There is also a hydrotherapy pool in Soundwell, South Gloucestershire which is now provided as part of the Sirona South Gloucestershire learning disabilities service,

and can potentially be accessed by service users from Bath and North East Somerset subject to availability.

Each of these is a purpose built hydrotherapy service, with the appropriate facilities for disabled people, e.g. hoists, handrails, changing cubicles, wheelchair accessibility.

#### **4. Demand for services**

Demand for services is high, and all services are well used, particularly Monday – Friday between 9 – 5. Both the RUH and the RNHRD also provide sessions in the evening, as do Three Ways school and Bath University. A number of services are known to currently have a waiting list for accessing hydrotherapy.

Whilst acknowledging the level of demand it is noted that the CCG has received no notification of concern regarding the level of provision available from either the RUH or the RNHRD through the formal contract monitoring processes, nor are any individual complaints or concerns believed to have been raised through the PALs/complaints procedures of either provider or the CCG as the commissioner of services.

The Senior Commissioning Manager for NHS Bath and North East Somerset CCG/Bath and North East Somerset Council has recently met with all providers of hydrotherapy services (as above) to begin the process of scoping current hydrotherapy provision across the authority to establish what capacity there is for ensuring adequate access for individuals, particularly people with learning disabilities, with a need for a hydrotherapy service. This first meeting has identified some options for accessing additional hydrotherapy sessions from current providers that can be taken up with immediate effect subject to timetabling access in agreement with Sirona Care and Health.

**Mike MacCallam**  
**Senior Commissioning Manager**  
01/05/2014