

Same Sex Accomodation (DSSA) Policy

Version number :	1.0
Consultation Groups	BLB directors and clinical directors
Approved by (Sponsor Group)	Lead Nurses
Ratified by:	Quality Committee
Date ratified:	18 April 2018
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Implementation Date :	April 2018
Last Review Date	April 2018
Next Review date:	April 2021

Services	Applicable to
Trustwide	√
Mental Health and LD	
Community Health Services	

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The NHS Constitution states that all patients should feel that their privacy and dignity are respected while they are in hospital. There is evidence to show that same-sex accommodation is a priority for many patients, and that it is closely connected to their perceptions of privacy and dignity.
- 1.2 All service users during their inpatient stay will be cared for within same sex provision as defined within this clinical guideline; the configuration of the Trust inpatient wards ensures that there is no requirement for there to be any exceptions to this.
- 1.3 A number of factors are detailed to monitor that same sex accommodation is consistently provided across all inpatient areas and to ensure that all service users and their carers are aware of the provision.

2. What is Same Sex Accommodation?

- 2.1. If a Same-sex accommodation is regarded as:

Same-sex wards – a ward/inpatient area/day hospital, with all facilities, including dedicated toilet and washing facilities, occupied solely by either men or women, boys or girls

Mixed-sex wards – with single bedrooms and same-sex toilet and washing facilities (preferably en-suite) or

- Patients should not have to pass through the bedrooms/bed bays of the opposite sex to access their own bedrooms or toilet/washing facilities. Ideally, service users should not pass through mixed, communal areas adjacent to their bedrooms/bed bays to access their washing facilities. The exception is toilet facilities used while in day areas where service users are fully dressed.

- 2.2 Some WCs and bathrooms contain specialist facilities (e.g. hoists) to make them accessible for disabled users. Such facilities may be designated unisex as long as they are for use by one person at a time, are lockable from the inside (with external override), a risk assessment has been conducted and, where necessary, the service user is escorted by a member of staff. The ideal remains to have segregated accessible facilities where this is possible.

- 2.3 In mixed-sex wards, there will be separate parts of the ward for males and females with designated areas for bedrooms and toilet/washing facilities for each sex. There may be exceptional times when a bedroom area may be mixed i.e. an absolute emergency situation. In such cases, bedrooms and toilet/bathing facilities should be designated to achieve as much gender separation as possible with care supported by appropriate staffing and this must be reviewed at least on a daily basis.

3. Signage

- 3.1. All bedrooms and sleeping areas, bathrooms and toilets and ladies only lounges have clear signs on them indicating their gender use.
- 3.2. For those rooms, e.g. assisted bathrooms and toilets, which have specialist equipment and as a consequence can be shared by both sexes, there is clear signage to indicate when they are in use and by which sex at the time of use.

4. Sitting Rooms

- 4.1. In Mental Health & Learning Disability Services, each ward must ensure it provides a clearly signed female-only sitting room, as well as communal / mixed sex lounges.
- 4.2. In Community Health Services hospitals, female patients must be offered the choice of eating by their bedside where only a mixed day room is available.

5. Special Considerations

5.1. Single Sex Wards:

- 5.1.1. Where wards are providing specific single sex ward/accommodation to a gender specific client group, this procedure equally applies in relation to service users' privacy and dignity being respected.

5.2. Transgender/transsexual Service Users:

- 5.2.1. Good practice requires that clinical responses should be service user focused, respectful and flexible towards all transgender people who live continuously or temporarily in the gender role that is opposite to their natural sex. Please see Transgender Policy.

5.3. Maintaining same sex accommodation in the event of a Major Incident/Pandemic Outbreak

- 7.2.1 The Trust's Major Incident Plan sets out a framework for organisational response to any kind of major incident affecting service users and/or staff.
- 7.2.2 This alongside the business continuity plans for each of the Trust's individual services/departments will support the on-going provision of same sex accommodation during any such incident / outbreak.
- 7.2.3 If during a Major Incident / Pandemic Outbreak patient safety may be compromised by maintaining same sex accommodation then a risk assessment should be completed and any breaches must be recorded.

6. Breaches

- 6.1 In the event of a potential breach of the above procedures regarding sleeping accommodation, staff on the unit must inform their manager/manager on-call.
- 6.2 The manager on call must escalate any breaches to the Executive Directors and appropriate Director/Director on call for decision to breach
- 6.3 Staff must submit an incident form via Datix, clearly indicating the nature of the

breach and ensuring the following incident classifications are selected on the Datix Web form:

- Type - care and treatment
- Category – access or transition problem
- Sub category - single sex accommodation breach

6.4 Any breaches will be included in the quality and performance report received by the Executive Operational Committee and the Board of Directors.