

News Release

10 January 2012

New dedicated women's unit at DCH

A phone call from a patient has led to a new dedicated area for female patients being created at Dorset County Hospital.

Retired teacher Gill Harler, from Weymouth, knows DCH well as she and her late parents have been treated there.

During her time spent in the hospital she noticed that gynaecology and female cancer inpatients were being cared for in various wards throughout the hospital. She felt that women would benefit enormously by staying on a ward together so they could share their experiences.

Mrs Harler telephoned Chief Executive Jean O'Callaghan directly to feed back her thoughts. Discussions with staff revealed that they too were keen to see a dedicated area created and the feasibility of the idea was pursued enthusiastically.

Within months Ilchester Ward had been reconfigured and a separate area for female patients had been established on the ward, with dedicated bays and bathrooms, and single rooms with en suite facilities.

Mrs Harler said: "When I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, I wanted something good to come out of something bad. I saw that gynaecology and cancer patients were dotted around the hospital and didn't feel that was right. Women can offer each other so much support if they are treated together.

"I'm so grateful that I was listened to and that something has been done. The area that has been created is lovely, and very spacious, I'm really pleased. Women coming in for gynaecology or cancer surgery can now be reassured that they will be cared for in a dedicated area where they can get understanding and support from other women going through the same as them."

Matron for Surgery and Critical Care Miles Tompkins said: "It has been shown that it enhances recovery if patients can share their experiences and support each other. If space allows in the future we hope to create a day room on the unit so women can talk together in a more relaxed environment."

Chief Executive Jean O'Callaghan said: "This shows just how important patient feedback can be and I hope reassures people that it is always worth contacting us with their thoughts and feelings about how they and their loved ones have been

treated. We always listen and where it is possible to improve care and facilities we will.”

ENDS

PHOTO: Patient Gill Harler is shown around the new women’s unit at DCH by, from left, Matron for Surgery and Critical Care Miles Tompkins, Chief Executive Jean O’Callaghan and Director of Workforce and Human Resources Mark Power.

For more information please contact Communications Manager Susie Palmer on 01305 254683, susie.palmer@dchft.nhs.uk, Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 2.30pm. Outside of these hours you can contact PA to Chief Executive/Communications Assistant Annaliese Wykes on 01305 254645, annaliese.wykes@dchft.nhs.uk

