**Monday 2 December 2024**

**Chemotherapy treatment now available at Williton Hospital**

Chemotherapy is now available at Williton Community Hospital for the first time and follows the successful introduction of the treatment at Bridgwater and Wellington hospitals over the last few years.

Emma Wells-Burr, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust’s manager of the Beacon Day Unit at Musgrove Park Hospital, which also provides chemotherapy services at the three community hospitals, said she’s very pleased to be able to offer this treatment at Williton Hospital.

“Being able to offer this service in West Somerset gives our patients that extra choice to be treated closer to home for their regular treatment,” she said.

“The only occasion patients generally now have to go to Taunton is for their first two doses of chemotherapy, in case they experience an adverse reaction – which happens on very rare occasions.

“The side effects of chemotherapy can include nausea and vomiting, so not having that additional journey can really help those patients.”

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust began offering chemotherapy treatment at both Bridgwater and Wellington community hospitals in 2021 after the trust needed to stand down the previous mobile chemotherapy bus arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emma continued: “As the bus used to visit Minehead, we felt that there was a cohort of patients in the West Somerset who were missing out on having chemotherapy closer to home, as they had to travel to be seen in Taunton.

“We got together with our colleagues at Williton Hospital, who told us that they had unused clinical space that would be perfect for us to offer treatments like chemotherapy.

“Our colleagues worked hard to set up the clinic, and it now runs every Wednesday. It has taken off straightaway with our four chemotherapy treatment chairs full every week, so once it’s a bit more established in Williton, we’re likely to extend it to twice a week.

“We already run the service two days a week at both Wellington and Bridgwater community hospitals, and with demand so high, we’re exploring the possibility of extending it to five days at Bridgwater in the near future.

“Much of this has been possible because we carried out a recruitment drive, ensuring we have enough nurses to cover the growing demand for chemotherapy, and we expect the new service in Williton will help to further reduce the waiting times.

“We currently have a two to three week wait, but depending on how urgently the treatment needs to start, we’d be struggling if we didn’t have these extra community hospital treatment options.”

The Somerset chemotherapy service is run by one single team that rotates between Musgrove Park Hospital and the three community hospitals, and Emma said this has proven beneficial for both patients and colleagues alike.

She continued: “Our colleagues have found that using our community hospitals for chemotherapy treatment has been really positive as there’s a lot of room, meaning it’s in effect our own space for cancer treatment…patients have told us that they find it much easier too, being treated nearer home with free parking available at two of the sites.

“One of the other benefits for patients being treated at our community hospitals is how by only having four treatment chairs, we’re able to offer more one-to-one care, in a less busy environment, meaning colleagues can spend more time with our patients.”

“Another real benefit of being at Williton Hospital is how our colleagues in the ambulatory care department, already based there, now take bloods for patients, which is particularly useful in helping to take the load away from busy GP surgeries.”

**Ends**

### Attached photo:

Pictured (left to right): Chinchu Abraham and Beth Quick - staff nurses, and Andre Guerrier - patient.

### For further information, please contact:

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