

A Selection of Definitions and Descriptions of Community Hospitals

These are a selection of various definitions and descriptions of community hospitals. There is yet to be one definition that is universally adopted, although the definition offered by Ritchie is the most frequently cited.

Definition

"A local hospital or unit, providing an appropriate range and format of health care facilities and resources. These will include in-patients, out-patients, diagnostics, day care, primary care and outreach services for patients provided by multidisciplinary teams." Ritchie, L. (1996) "Community Hospitals in Scotland - Promoting Progress." Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.

Purpose

"Its objectives should be to meet the local community's non-specialist health needs, to take a holistic approach to patient care and to work towards maintaining patients in the community wherever possible." Tucker, H. (1987). "The Role and Function of Community Hospitals - Kings Fund Project Paper Number 70" London : Kings Edward's Hospital Fund for London

DH Definition

"The community hospital is a service which offers integrated health and social care and is supported by community-based professionals who have direct access to its services" Department of Health (2006) "Our Health Our Care Our Community - Investing in Community hospitals and services." London: Department of Health.

DH Description

"A modern community hospital service aims to provide an integrated local health and social care resource for the local population to which it belongs.

These local facilities develop as a result of negotiations between local people, practitioners and the NHS. Community hospitals are an effective extension to primary care with medical support provided largely from local GPs.

The service models include rehabilitation, palliative care, intermediate care and surgical care, plus emergency and maternity facilities.

Community Hospital interventions ranging from day surgery to medical inpatient episodes are characterised by care pathways that maximise local sources of support, including those outside the NHS and health care professionals.

This integrated systems approach and sense of devolved accountability places the community hospital as a focus of local community networks

Department of Health (2006) "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: A new direction for community services." London: Department of Health.

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