

Quality Network for Inpatient CAMHS Annual Forum #QNICForum25

Learning Disability and Autism in Inpatient CAMHS: Why it Matters Friday 20 June 2025, Royal College of Psychiatrists

09.30-10.00	Registration and Refreshments	
10.00 – 10.10	Chairs Welcome Laurie van Niekerk QNIC Advisory Group Member Hannah Fox QNIC Patient Representative	
10.10 – 10.40	Quality Network for Inpatient CAMHS Project Update Arun Das QNIC Programme Manager Leyla Ury QNIC Deputy Programme Manager Lucy Anderson QNIC Project Officer Peter Chang QNIC-ROSE Project Officer	
10.40 – 11.25	Working with Experts by Experience to make inpatient CAMHS services ‘autism friendly’ Natalie Kinsella Participation Lead, Hampshire, Kent and Sussex CAMHS Provider Collaborative Expert by Experience Panel	
11.25-11.40	Break	
11.40-12.20	LDA Hospital @ Home – Is it a new way of working? Dr Kindy Mahal Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Dr Kate Howells Lead Clinical Psychologist Laura Heath CAMHS Transforming Care Case Manager, LDA Hospital @ Home	
12.20-12.55	Ancora House Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder – Care and Management Terri Anne Nolan Ward Manager Sarah Oliver Nurse Consultant, Ancora House	Jade School: A Case Study of Educational Provision within a Tier 4 Learning Disability and Autism Service Lauren Preece Teacher, Jade Ward, Brooklands Hospital
12.55-13.45	Lunch	
13.45-14.25	“Welcome to Holland” - How Learning Disability and Neurodiversity principles can help us to understand and work with inpatient CAMHS presentations Helen Wigglesworth Clinical Psychologist Natalie Goodwin Lead Occupational Therapist for Inpatient CAMHS, Ruby Lodge, Becton Centre for Children and Young People	
14.25-15.05	Referral Patterns, Demographics, and Clinical Outcomes of Autistic Children and Adolescents and those with Eating Disorders in Psychiatric Inpatient Care in the South of England Alice Rorke Research Assistant, Thames Valley Tier 4 CAMHS Provider Collaborative Samuel Lloyd-White Lead Clinical Psychologist, Meadow Unit	Understanding the use of Psychotropic Medication in Children and Young People's Mental Health Inpatient Services: A Quality Improvement Project Anne Webster Programme Lead, Quality Transformation Team Dave Branford Independent Pharmacy Consultant Sophie Gore Expert by Experience, NHS England
15.05-15.20	Break	
15.20- 15.55	CAMHS Sensory Pathway - A joint approach to meet Young People's Sensory Needs Rebecca Killey CAMHS Clinical Lead Occupational Therapist, Cygnet Bury Forestwood	
15.55-16:10	Close & Evaluation Laurie van Niekerk QNIC Advisory Group Member Hannah Fox QNIC Patient Representative	
16:10 – 17:15	Drinks Reception	

Working with Experts by Experience to make inpatient CAMHS services 'autism friendly'

Natalie Kinsella is the Participation Lead for the Hampshire, Kent and Sussex CAMHS Provider Collaborative.

The Hampshire, Kent and Sussex CAMHS Tier 4 Participation team work closely with their team of **Experts by Experience (EbEs)**. A key priority for the focus of their work, which has been identified by EbEs, is supporting services to be 'autism friendly'. This relates not only to the service environment, but also to the care and treatment approaches being used and supporting staff to truly understand the individual autistic experience to achieve best outcomes.

The Hampshire Kent and Sussex CAMHS Tier 4 Participation team invite you to listen to their panel of EbEs, and ask questions to help improve and inform your own services, and to promote inclusivity and autism friendly practice in the following areas:

- Care and treatment
- Emotional regulation
- Communication and resources
- Environments / sensory experience
- Whole family approach and ensuring that parent/carer voices are heard when one or both parents identify as being autistic.

They are keen to share their valuable lived experiences of how important it is to look through the individual autistic lens at every stage of the inpatient journey, and why this matters to them. They believe that small changes and adjustments can make a huge impact and difference to their experience and outcomes of their treatment.

LDA Hospital @ Home – Is it a new way of working?

Dr Kindy Mahal, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, **Dr Kate Howells**, Lead Clinical Psychologist, and **Laura Heath**, CAMHS Transforming Care Case Manager, will be presenting findings from the first 12 months of the LDA Hospital@Home service.

The LDA Hospital@Home is an innovative Tier 4 alternative to inpatient care for young people with mental health needs who are autistic and/or have a learning disability. It is commissioned by the Thames Valley CAMHS Tier 4 Provider Collaborative and hosted by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. The purpose of their presentation will be to share reflections on the commissioning journey, the teams' values, goals and structure, as well as insights gained since 'admitting' their first young person in May 2024.

Ancora House Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder – Care and Management

Terri Anne Nolan, Ward Manager, and **Sarah Oliver**, Nurse Consultant, are from QNIC accredited service, Ancora House.

In line with national trends, Ancora House has seen a significant increase in young people admitted with autistic presentations and learning disabilities, which has posed various challenges for the service. This presentation will discuss these challenges, and the strategies implemented to overcome them, particularly through the lens of Ancora House's journey towards National Autism Society accreditation.

Jade School: A Case Study of Educational Provision within a Tier 4 Learning Disability and Autism Service

Lauren Preece is a qualified teacher specialising in education for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) within a Tier 4 specialist inpatient service for children and young people with significant or complex learning disabilities and autism (*Jade Ward, Brooklands Hospital*). Recently, Lauren completed a master's degree in profound and multiple learning disabilities, with her research focusing on education for children and young people with both learning disabilities and mental illness. She is now preparing to embark on a PhD, provisionally exploring trauma within this context.

The case study she is presenting provides an in-depth look at the education provision within the Jade Unit. It explores the structure of the education programme, detailing how they integrate learning within the broader physical and therapeutic environment.

“Welcome to Holland” - How Learning Disability and Neurodiversity principles can help us to understand and work with inpatient CAMHS presentations

Helen Wigglesworth and **Natalie Goodwin** are the Senior Clinical Psychologist and Lead Occupational Therapist at *Ruby Lodge, Becton Centre for Children and Young People*. In this presentation, Helen and Natalie will explore how foundational principles that have been embedded in the world of learning disability and neurodiversity for decades —such as the importance of being present, “picking battles”, behaviours happen for a reason and thinking “outside of the box”— can enhance support for young people in inpatient CAMHS. They will highlight the importance of integrating these approaches into mainstream inpatient care, demonstrating their relevance through real-world examples and the Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) model. By drawing on over a century of expertise in learning disability and neurodiversity, Helen and Natalie aim to show how these insights can be powerful resources for inpatient CAMHS staff in 2025.

Referral Patterns, Demographics, and Clinical Outcomes of Autistic Children and Adolescents and those with Eating Disorders in Psychiatric Inpatient Care in the South of England

Alice Rorke (Research Assistant, Thames Valley, Tier 4 CAMHS Provider Collaborative) and **Samuel Lloyd-White** (Lead Clinical Psychologist, Meadow Unit) will present two key studies exploring psychiatric inpatient referrals for children and adolescents with eating disorders and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The first study examines referral patterns in the South of England from 2019-2025, highlighting a sharp rise in inpatient admissions for eating disorders, ASD, and their co-occurrence. Findings reveal a 68% increase in nasogastric tube referrals within eating disorder cases, emphasising the growing complexity of clinical needs in psychiatric care.

The second study focuses on autistic children and adolescents admitted to inpatient services in the Thames Valley between 2019-2024. It identifies concerning trends, such as higher crisis referrals, increased placement in restrictive settings like PICU, longer inpatient stays, and poorer clinical outcomes compared to non-autistic peers. These findings underscore the urgent need to refine inpatient care approaches to better support neurodivergent youth.

Attendees can expect thought-provoking insights into the evolving demands of psychiatric inpatient care and discussions on improving support for young people with autism and eating disorders.

Understanding the use of Psychotropic Medication in Children and Young People's Mental Health Inpatient Services: A Quality Improvement Project

Anne Webster (Programme Lead, Quality Transformation Team), **Dave Branford** and **Sophie Gore** (Expert by Experience, NHS England) will be discussing their findings from the psychotropic medication in children and young people's mental health inpatient services quality improvement programme 2024/25. The aims of this quality improvement programme are

- to enable providers of mental health in-patient services for children and young people in England to review their prescribing practice informed by the benchmarked census findings alongside the views and experiences of children, young people and their parents/carers.
- to identify themes at a national level to inform further quality improvement work in this important area.

There have now been two rounds of this quality improvement programme in 2022/23 and 2024/25. The 2024/25 programme made improvements to tools based on feedback, usability and on the themes from the 2022/23 work.

In this session, Anne, Dave and Sophie will tell you about the overall findings of the census and questionnaires in the 2024/25 programme and how this compares with the 2022/23 programme.

They will share the emerging themes and examples of provider quality improvements.

CAMHS Sensory Pathway - A joint approach to meet Young People's Sensory Needs

Rebecca Killey is a CAMHS Clinical Lead Occupational Therapist at Cygnet Bury Forestwood. In her presentation, she will discuss how over the past 6 months the CAMHS occupational therapy service line has led on completing a project to ensure all young people sensory needs are met. This has involved training for all staff, occupational therapist specific training, how to identify who has sensory needs, development of a sensory group, intervention plans and risk assessment.

This presentation will talk about what the pathway has included, why the pathway is needed, how this is supporting young people with Autism, how this is reducing restrictive practice and how this can be a joint approach across the teams.