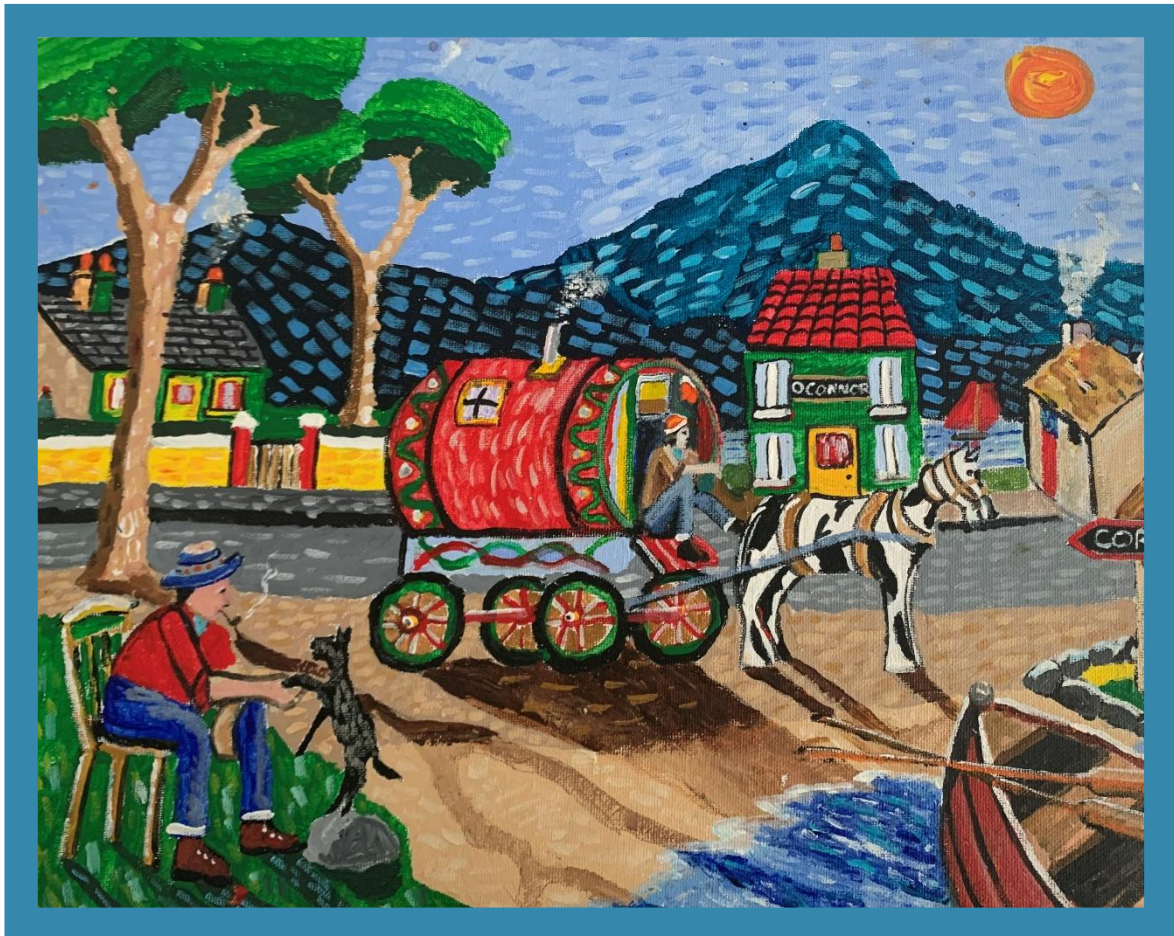


QNFMHS Bulletin: Accreditation Journeys Northside House & Cygnet Hospital Woking



'The Path Forward' created by W.O.C., a patient from the National Forensic Mental Health Service Dublin.

Contents

QNFMS Accreditation	3
Northside House.....	4
Cygnets Hospital Working.....	10
Network Guidance Documents	14
Other accredited services	14
Network Updates	14

QNFMHS Accreditation

The Quality Network's accreditation process involves a period of self and peer-review. The self-review process begins three months before the service's peer-review date.

During the self-review period services will score every standard and provide commentary describing how they meet [QNFMHS standards](#). Additionally, surveys from patients, carers and staff are collected as well as case note audits. Lastly, a range of evidence is required to be submitted.

Following the self-review period, the service will be visited by a team of peer-reviewers who will review the service against QNFMHS standards. Following the visit, a local report is compiled, and additional evidence is requested for any not met standards. Evidence is reviewed and brought to the accreditation committee for review. There are three opportunities for this.

Services must meet **100%** of type 1 standards, **80%** of type 2 standards and **60%** of type 3 standards to be awarded accreditation.

Accreditation is valid for up to **three years**, subject to satisfactory completion of an interim self-review.

Type 1: Essential standards. Failure to meet these would result in a significant threat to patient safety, rights or dignity and/or would breach the law. These standards also include the fundamentals of care, including the provision of evidence-based care and treatment.

Type 2: Expected standards that all services should meet.

Type 3: Desirable standards that high performing services should meet.



'St Paul's Cathedral' created by G.B., a patient at Prestwich Hospital

Northside House

Catton and Drayton Wards on their Celebration of QNFMHS Accreditation

Author: Vickram Lutchmeah, Modern Matron at Northside House.

Catton and Drayton Medium Secure Unit wards at Northside House, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust achieved accreditation with the Quality Network for Forensic Mental Health Services (QNFMHS) in December 2025. There are currently only seven QNFMHS accredited services across the United Kingdom. This is a big achievement and shows how committed our teams are to giving safe, supportive and high-quality care. To celebrate this the team held a celebration event on 27 February 2026. Vickram Lutchmeah, Modern Matron for Catton and Drayton wards, presented at East of Provider Collaborative and is also invited to present at the QNFMHS Annual Forum on 16 June 2026 to discuss their experience of the process and to share learning with the network. You can book to attend this event on the [QNFMHS website](#).

The road to accreditation took teamwork, planning and lots of hard work. Every two weeks, the team met to check progress, look at action plans and review what was going well and what needed improvement. Staff from all roles, including nurses, doctors, psychologists, occupational therapists (OTs), support workers and admin colleagues, came together to gather evidence and shape the work.

We also listened closely to patients and carers. Their feedback helped guide decisions and made sure improvements truly supported the people we care for.

The QNFMHS Network representative gave clear advice along the way, helping us to stay on track and strengthen our evidence. Staff continued to give their best despite day-to-day pressures, and their dedication really shone through.



The Positive Impact

This accreditation has strengthened how we work. Our governance systems are clearer, patient safety has improved, and we are seeing more consistency in the therapeutic care we provide. Staff have told us they feel proud and more confident in the direction of the service. This success also shows partners and regulators that our wards continue to meet the highest national standards.



*Patient art
displayed on the ward*

Supporting Other Wards

The medium secure unit (MSU) leadership team is now helping three more secure wards on their own accreditation journeys. We are sharing learning, templates and support so that all wards can grow and improve together.



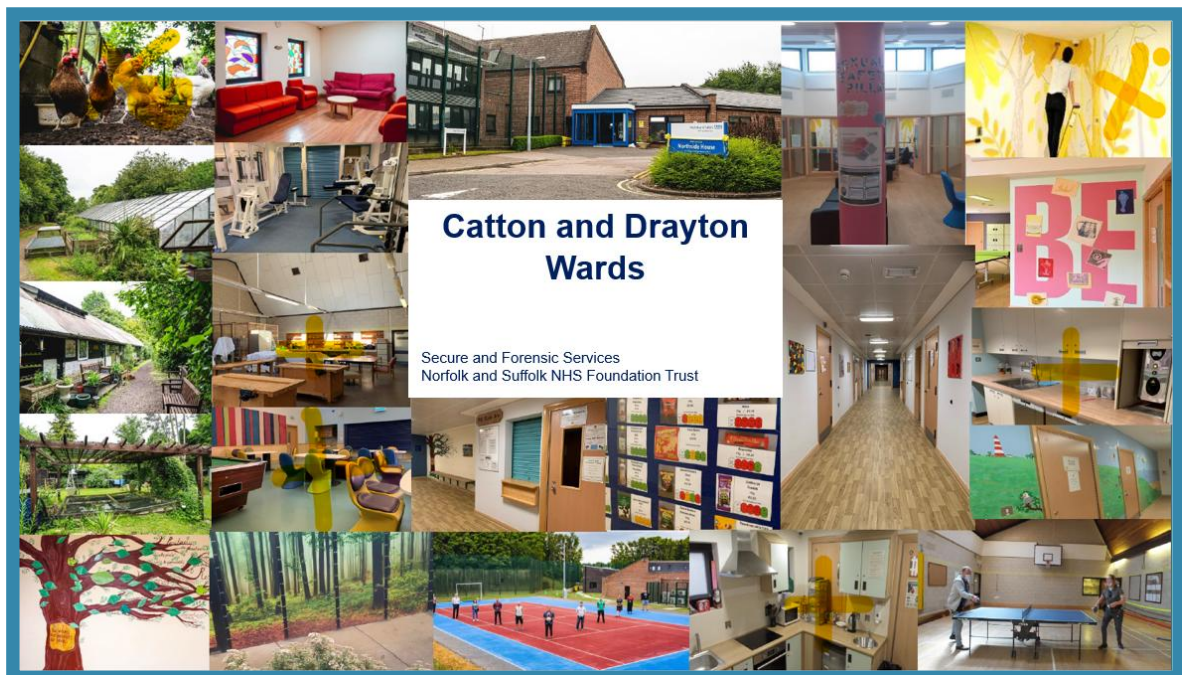
A Special Sustainability Award

Alongside accreditation, Catton and Drayton wards also received the Sustainable Mental Health Service Commendation from the Royal College of Psychiatrists. This award recognises our commitment to environmentally friendly ways of working. The teams met 90% of the CCQI sustainability standards - a brilliant achievement.



Thank You

A huge thank you to every member of staff for your hard work, passion and teamwork. Catton and Drayton will be sharing their journey at the 2026 QNFMHS Annual Forum, and we look forward to continuing this excellent work together.



Secure and Forensic Services - Drayton & Catton Ward QNFMHS Accreditation

Patient Experience:

Patients overall spoke very positively about their experience at Drayton ward. They noted the vast number of activities that are on offer to them, in particular the sports, cooking and gardening groups. Patients discussed their experience with staff at the service, noting how staff always treat them with compassion, dignity and respect and that staff are kind and always knock on their door before entering their bedrooms. Additionally, "I can't fault them." "I don't see what else they could do." "I can't begin to say how grateful I am." 6 patients stated that on admission staff made them feel welcome and showed them around the ward. Further, patients discussed the food was 'great' and that there are options for different dietary or religious needs, such as vegetarian or kosher. They also highlighted the portion sizes are sufficient and there are always healthy options on offer. Finally, one patient reflected on how the service go above and beyond with their care, noting when staff were able to arrange for them to access their local church service via video link, with the patient stating 'organising [the video link] was really important to me'.

Carers Experience:

Carers spoke positively about the service. Carers noted that they 'always have someone to turn to' at the service and feel as though they can reach out to the service for support and know who to contact if they needed specific support. Overall, carers emphasised they feel their loved ones are really cared for at the service and the service reportedly provides exemplary care.



Congratulations
Drayton &
Catton!

Senior Leadership Feedback:

I am absolutely delighted to hear that Catton Ward has been officially accredited by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Being the third secure ward in the country to receive this prestigious recognition is a remarkable achievement.

Caroline Donovan - CEO

This is truly wonderful news - and what a way to cap off an amazing week for you and all the team! Congratulations and thank you.

Zoe Billingham - Chair Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust

Well done – that is such great news!

Sarah Maxwell - Medical Director

Well done Catton ward! Just brilliant news!

Rebecca Driver - Director of Communication and Engagement

This is fantastic news well done team!

Saru Mutema - Director of Operations

What incredible news! Well done to the clinical team and everyone else involved in supporting this process.

Julie Parker - Director of Psychology

Wonderful news, well done to all!

Talent Beiley - Associate Director of Nursing



Top Tips: Catton and Drayton Wards Explain How They Achieved Accreditation

1. Start Early!

Start the process as soon as you are given the log in details for the online workbook on the College Accreditation Review System (CARS) and this is normally three months before the peer review date. This provides enough time to gather evidence, complete case notes audits, achieving the required survey response thresholds (100% of staff, 50% of patients and carers) and address any gaps without unnecessary pressure.

2. Delegate Tasks Clearly

Allocate responsibilities to ensure every aspect of the process is owned and completed efficiently:

- **Ward Carer's Ambassador** – support carers to complete the carers' survey.
- **Care Teams** – assist each patient in completing the patient survey to ensure service user voice is fully represented.
- **Charge Nurse (Case Note Audit)** – complete all case record reviews to a high standard.
- **Charge Nurse (Evidence Collection)** – gather, organise, and prepare all evidence required for the self-review
- **Admin Support** – anonymise documents* and coordinate information for submission and communicate with Quality Network representative for queries. *See the guidance for anonymising documents under 'Network Guidance Documents'.

3. Provide Protected Time

- Ensure staff have protected time to complete their allocated tasks. This allows for high-quality work, reduces duplication, and supports staff wellbeing during the preparation period.

4. Involve Everyone

- Engage all staff in understanding the standards. This builds ownership and ensures accreditation reflects genuine, everyday practice rather than a one-off effort.
- A whole-team approach was at the heart of this success. Nurses, doctors, psychologists, occupational therapists, support workers and administrative staff worked collectively to review standards and assemble evidence.

5. Maintain Oversight and Regular Check-Ins

The Matron oversees the overall process, monitoring progress and offering guidance. Short, regular check-ins help identify any gaps early and keep the whole team aligned. Matron held regular meetings to check in with all staff.

6. Stay Focused

The accreditation process spans several months, beginning with the self-review and completion of the workbook, followed by the peer review, and finally the accreditation committee stages. You will have three opportunities to be presented to the accreditation committee, so make sure you use each one wisely.

Patient Experience & Testimonials

"There have been a wide range of courses to do and are good to prepare you for discharge."

"Thank you for the treatment and care that I have been given that has made me feel and get well."

"It's all good."

"I don't see what else they could do."

"I can't fault them."

Carers Experience & Testimonials

"The care my son received from admission to hospital to the time he was discharged was extremely good. We felt supported as a family."

"We are extremely grateful to all involved in his care and treatment."

"The staff who accompany us on our visits have been excellent. At the beginning of the admission when things were looking bleak, we were given hope that our loved one would improve, which is what in fact happened."

Cygnnet Hospital Woking

Greenacre and Oaktree Double Accreditation Success

Author: Kirti Paik-Inkar, Clinical Practice Educator at Cygnnet Hospital Woking.

Cygnnet Hospital Woking began with the developmental membership before moving to the accreditation membership in 2025. Cygnnet Hospital Woking put forward two of their wards, Greenacre and Oaktree Ward. Both wards were accredited in December 2025 following the successful completion of the self-review, peer-review and accreditation committee processes.

Our service has recently undergone a formal peer-review process overseen by the Royal College of Psychiatrists as part of its accreditation framework for forensic mental health services in Low Secure wards. This accreditation evaluates competence, impartiality, and compliance with nationally recognised standards, providing a robust benchmark for the quality of forensic mental health care.

The peer review involved an in-depth assessment of standards of care, the physical environment, clinical documentation and health records, staff training and qualifications, and support and supervision arrangements. The outcome reflects the collective dedication, professionalism, and compassion demonstrated by every member of the team.

As highlighted by the service leadership: *“This achievement is the result of sustained hard work, continuous improvement, and a shared commitment to delivering high-quality care. I am immensely proud of our team and grateful to everyone who has contributed to this success, including colleagues who have previously served on the service. We remain committed to ongoing development and to providing the best possible care for the people we support.”*



Read the service's full article on their website: [Double Accreditation Success for Cygnet Hospital Woking - Cygnet](#)

Cygnet Hospital Woking Summarise the Key Positive Findings from their Peer-Review

Therapeutic Environment

The reviewers noted that Greenacre Ward provides a bright, airy, and spacious environment. Cygnet Woking offers a wide range of facilities to enhance patient experience and recovery, including a gallery, hairdressing service (with costs fully covered), sensory rooms, a music room, a tuck shop, an activity of daily living (ADL) kitchen fully funded through the occupational therapy (OT) budget, and a TV lounge with mood lighting.

Co-Production and Patient Involvement

Co-production between staff and patients has grown significantly. Experts by experience now work closely with patients to shape service development and actively participate in clinical governance meetings and the steering group. Patients also take on meaningful leadership and partnership roles, including chairing the People's Council, participating in staff recruitment interview panels, co-facilitating staff training alongside qualified professionals, and supporting psychology-led patient groups.

Vocational and Development Opportunities

The service offers outstanding development opportunities for patients through paid vocational roles, including kitchen assistants, gardeners, tuck shop assistants, librarians, and maths tutors. Patients are also supported to undertake paid work in the broader community and to progress further through initiatives such as chef development days.

Staff Support and Wellbeing

The peer review commended the strong emphasis on staff wellbeing and support. Initiatives include occupational health services, post-sickness support, and access to therapy, reflective practice sessions, and drop-in clinics following injuries or assaults. Staff wellbeing is actively monitored through a weekly burnout-tracking form. Engagement and morale are further supported through initiatives such as Hot Chocolate Day, Flower Friday (highlighting staff members in the weekly newsletter), team away days, wellbeing calendar events, pet therapy, and cultural celebration days.

Carer Engagement and Involvement

Efforts to enhance carer involvement were recognised as commendable. Each ward has a designated carers' champion to facilitate communication between carers and the clinical team. Carers are invited to join online carers' group sessions led by Cygnet family, friends, and carers leads. These sessions, held regularly throughout the year, offer education and support through

presentations by various professionals. Wherever possible, carers are involved in ward rounds, care planning, and shared decision-making, with clear procedures in place to support carers appropriately when consent is withdrawn.

This recognition highlights not only compliance with national standards but also the culture of collaboration, compassion, and continuous improvement that underpins the work at Greenacre Ward. It stands as a testament to the commitment of both current and former team members in delivering high-quality, person-centred forensic mental health care.

Areas of Achievement and Feedback from Oaktree Ward

The hospital and ward environment is a clear strength. The Social Hub provides a vibrant shared space with comfortable seating, creative décor, games, and communal facilities, encouraging social interaction across wards. Patients also benefit from access to creative activities, a regularly refreshed art wall to showcase their work, and plans for a garden coffee bar to enhance the environment further.

Patient involvement and co-production are well embedded. A key achievement is the patient-led “ASD and Me” training, which was successfully rolled out across multiple sites. The ward offers a wide range of meaningful and vocational opportunities, including paid roles, volunteering, and partnerships with local organisations. Initiatives such as the fob access pilot, Music Doctor programme, and Garden to Grow project support independence, creativity, and purpose, which patients describe as enjoyable and meaningful.

Patient feedback indicates reasonable overall satisfaction. Patients value the quality and variety of food, regular one-to-one support, and multidisciplinary input from occupational therapy, psychology, and physical health services. The on-site hairdresser and the ward manager’s responsive leadership were also positively highlighted.

Carers praised the fortnightly consultant-led carer clinic, which provides a protected and supportive space to discuss concerns and receive professional guidance.

Staff report feeling supported through regular well-being check-ins, supervision, reflective practice, and approachable leadership. Initiatives promoting staff wellbeing, flexible working, and progression opportunities were positively noted. Feedback also highlighted opportunities to strengthen staffing levels, increase coproduction with patients, support positive risk-taking, and expand staff involvement in quality improvement projects.



Network Guidance Documents

- [Self-Review Checklist for Services](#)
- [CARS FAQs](#)
- [Evidence Guide](#)
- [Providing Evidence During Accreditation Processes](#)

Other accredited services

Congratulations to all our accredited services:

Alvaston Ward, Cygnet Hospital Derby, accredited on 17 October 2024

Ashford Unit, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, accredited on 12 December 2024

Saltwood Ward, Cygnet Hospital Maidstone, accredited on 11 December 2025

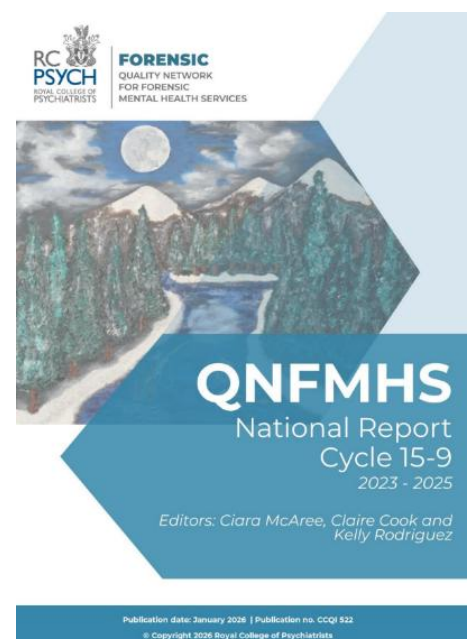
You can find more information about QNFMHS membership on [our website](#) or by emailing us at forensics@rcpsych.ac.uk.

Interested in working towards being an accredited member?

Get in touch with Ciara.mcaree@rcpsych.ac.uk

Network Updates

- We recently published the [QNFMHS National Report 2023-25](#) covering data from Cycle 15-9. Each unit is issued an anonymous number so that they can benchmark themselves against other services and the average score from services across the UK and Republic of Ireland.
- Alongside the QNFMHS National Report 2023–25, we have published a one-page [QNFMHS National Report Patient Summary](#) and a one-page [QNFMHS National Report Carer Summary](#). These summaries focus on the patient and carer-related findings from the national report. They are designed to support understanding of what the report found and what this means for people using services and their carers.



- We are continuing to hold our Carer Engagement Lead Forum quarterly. This forum allows carers leads from member services to discuss prevalent challenges, achievements and share learning across services. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Charlotte Darg, Project Officer (charlotte.darg@rcpsych.ac.uk).
- We are hosting our QNFMHS Annual Forum on 16 June 2026 at our London Office (21 Prescott St, E1 8BB). The draft programme is available on [our website](#). Use our [online booking form](#) to book your place now.
- The QNFMHS team are working to introduce a new Quality Network for Forensic Community Teams! This work began with an expression of interest form for community teams, and we are now revising the standards. We also held a consultation event on 21 January 2026 with over 60 attendees.
- Our Sister Network QNPMHS will be hosting their Annual Forum on 21 October 2026 at our London Office (21 Prescott St, E1 8BB). You can sign up for this event using our [online registration form](#).

Quality Network for Forensic Mental Health Services - Annual Forum 2026
 Tuesday 16 June 2026
 Royal College of Psychiatrists, 21 Prescott Street, London, E1 8BB

RC PSYCH
 ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

FORENSIC
 QUALITY NETWORK FOR FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Programme

09:00 **Registration and Refreshments**
 Join us for refreshments before the event starts and some early networking. Admission to the event is restricted to the registration period and within the allocated breaks

09:30 **Welcome and Introduction**
 Dr Jude Deacon, QNFMHS Advisory Group Chair and Director of Forensic Mental Health, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Nancy Button, QNFMHS Carer Representative, and Helen Slater, QNFMHS Patient Representative ([saved by Venue, the hearing aid!](#))

10:00 **Updates from the Quality Network**
 Clair McAree, Deputy Programme Manager, Ella Hibbs-Newman, Project Officer, Nancy Button, Carer Representative, and Helen Slater, Patient Representative

10:15 **The Impact of Physical Health Comorbidities within Secure Mental Health**
 Kirsty Pound, Forensic Psychologist, and Chelsea McNabb, Occupational Therapy Lead, Lee Mill Unit, LiveWell Southwest

10:45 **Refreshment Break**

11:15 **Supporting Complexity with Compassion, Quality Care for Forensic Women on Damson Ward**
 Dr Mansi Sood, Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist and Clinical Lead for Orchard Unit, and Dr Shumaila Asmat, Locum Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist (Damson Ward), West London NHS Foundation Trust

11:45 **The Mental Health Act Reforms and Forensic Services-Business As Usual?**
 Mat Kinton, Senior Policy Officer, Care Quality Commission

12:15 **Lunch and Networking**

13:15 **Quality Network for Forensic Community Mental Health Teams**
 Amy Baum and Niki Drokeford, Senior Forensic Community Nurses, Derbyshire Forensic Community Mental Health Team

13:45 **TBC**
 Elizabeth Allen, Director of Frontfoot

14:15 **Refreshment Break**

14:45 **Catton and Drayton Wards Accreditation Journeys**
 Vickram Lutchmeah, Modern Matron, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

15:15 **Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework - Early Reflections of Implementation**
 Jo Faulkner, Head of Forensic and Prison Mental Health Services, and Jenny Guest, Professional Lead for AHP and Social Work, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

15:45 **Final Plenary and close**
 Dr Jude Deacon, QNFMHS Advisory Group Chair

16:15 **End**

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PRISON
 QUALITY NETWORK FOR PRISON MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

SAVE THE DATE
QNPMHS
ANNUAL FORUM

DATE:
 21 October 2026

VENUE:
 21 Prescott Street
 London, E1 8BB

PRICES:
£85 for members
£120 for non-members
Free for patients and carers

The day will include:

- Workshops
- Panel discussions
- Expert speakers, including **Keynote Speaker - Professor Chris Whitty**

Registration to attend is open **now!**

Get in touch with the Network!

Email us at forensics@rcpsych.ac.uk

Follow us on X (formerly Twitter) [@rcpsychCCQI](https://twitter.com/rcpsychCCQI) to get the latest updates on the network, events and more.

Visit [our website](#) to see our full list of events, publications, membership details and more.