

A High Secure Nightingale Ward

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The complex needs of patients residing in secure psychiatric settings, with regard to challenging and aggressive behaviour, difficult psychiatric symptoms, and complicated psychotropic regimes, mean that they require skilled specialist mental health care even when physical health needs are also pressing. There is a limit however to the level of physical illness which can be safely managed within even the most secure and well-resourced forensic mental health wards. The Forensic Division of Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust identified a need for a service able to manage forensic mental health patients with covid-19, or recovering from it, who require physical and medical care beyond what can be provided in their usual settings. Such patients include those with the virus who are not appropriate for escalation or for whom a bed is not immediately available in general hospitals, and those in need of a period of extra care and rehabilitation before returning to their normal placement.

Given the need to cater for patients from all levels of security, Rampton Hospital was identified as a suitable location for this service. A project group was established with representation from nursing, facilities and estates, pharmacy, physical healthcare, security, medical and other relevant areas. A ground floor ward normally serving low dependency patients was chosen as the location. A programme of work was rapidly instigated to equip the area for its new purpose. Upgraded mains power was installed in each single occupancy room, with secure housing for oxygen cylinders provided to avoid tampering. Each room has a profiling bed with air mattress, sink, nebuliser, suction and oxygen concentrator. Manual handling aids and vital sign monitoring equipment are installed. The ward is divided into different areas to allow for 'hot' zones and non-patient areas for donning PPE, welfare facilities, etc.

Mental health staffing for the ward comprises volunteers from across Rampton Hospital including nurses, nursing assistants and occupational therapists. Registered General Nurses and Advanced Nurse Practitioners from the existing Physical Healthcare team and outside agencies were recruited to provide physical care together with Rampton's GPs. Links were established with colleagues in acute care for advice and guidance. Outside of usual hours, the ward is led by an ANP with further medical

advice available by telephone via Nottingham Emergency Medical Services and a palliative care hotline. The Hospital Pharmacy is providing palliative and other physical healthcare medicines. A temporary mortuary facility is available. During out of hours periods, the only medic on site will be the duty SAS doctor, but it is anticipated that they will only be involved in exceptional circumstances. One SAS doctor is acting as the main point of contact for Nightingale Ward.

The physical care available includes urethral catheterisation and management, pressure area management, oxygen therapy and nebulisation, wound care, limited IV antibiotic and fluid administration, and end of life care. Pathology services are provided by Bassetlaw Hospital with daily collections through the Blood Bikes scheme. All patients are assessed to determine their status with regard to DNACPR/ReSPECT documentation. Mental health care up to high secure level is provided, including where necessary the use of mechanical restraint. The existing Responsible Clinician for each patient remains in charge of their care and there is daily liaison with their teams. SAS doctors will provide acute input for psychiatric emergencies where needed.

At the time of writing, Nightingale Ward is open and managing its first patient, who is usually in medium secure care. It is an innovative and unique project which we anticipate will offer much learning about fully integrated physical and complex mental health care to inform future service developments.