



NHS Forth Valley

Intensive Psychiatric Care Units

Service Profile Exercise ~ *November 2009*

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Background

The Scottish Government's national mental health benchmarking project (January 2008) defined intensive psychiatric care units (IPCU) as:

'...a multi-disciplinary team with specialised training; the ratio of nursing staff will be higher than a general psychiatric ward. The service is recovery focused; it provides intensive treatment and interventions to patients who present an increased level of clinical risk and require an increased level of observation.' (Technical Appendix, January 2008).

The National Mental Health Services Assessment: Towards implementation of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 (March 2004) Report highlighted specific challenges faced by IPCUs in light of changes in mental health legislation. In particular, the report outlines the dual function often ascribed to IPCUs where they function as both a low level secure forensic unit and as an extension of general adult inpatient psychiatric services. This is further complicated by the need for appropriate care environments for females, adolescents, older adults and those with learning disabilities. The report concludes that "IPCU provision is a small but important part of services... and should remain central to planning decisions when implementing the [Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland)] Act."

Introduction to the IPCU project

There is very little published UK data about IPCUs. The NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (NHS QIS) 3-year strategic work programme, Improving the Quality of Mental Health Services, 2005–2008 recognised this and included a commitment to undertake an audit of IPCUs in Scotland. Before undertaking any work to assess how services are delivered within IPCUs, it is important that we have a clear picture of:

- how many IPCUs there are across Scotland
- the arrangements in place in NHS board areas that do not have local IPCU provision
- how the IPCUs are structured and staffed
- the relationships between IPCUs and other mental health services, and
- the referral pathways both in and out of IPCUs.

In order to gather this background information it was agreed that the IPCU project would be delivered in two distinct stages. Stage 1 is a national service profiling exercise covering all of the territorial NHS boards in Scotland.

In a parallel piece of work during Stage 1, the views and experiences of people who have received IPCU care and their informal carers will be sought. This work is being supported by Better Together, Scotland's national patient experience programme and is being delivered in collaboration with the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland.

This report contains the service profiling information. The user and carer experience information will be included in a national overview report alongside the service profile information. The national overview will be published in spring 2010 and will give a full representation of the national picture from both the perspective of those who provide services, and those who use them. The service profiling findings along with the views and ideas of service providers and service users and carers that have been sought and captured during Stage 1 of the project will inform the detail of Stage 2.

The service profiling process has two key parts: local information gathering and follow-up meetings. Using a service profiling questionnaire produced by NHS QIS, each NHS board gathered information on the IPCUs in its local area. These data were submitted, together with supporting evidence if applicable, to NHS QIS prior to the follow-up meetings. Follow-up meetings were held with local staff between May–July 2009 to discuss the responses provided by the NHS board and seek clarification on any issues.

This report presents the information supplied in the service profile form and the discussions at the follow-up meeting with **NHS Forth Valley** on **9 June 2009**.

1 Overview of local mental health services

Forth Valley is situated in central Scotland and has a population of around 288,473. While Forth Valley comprises both urban and rural areas, the majority of the population live in urban areas of which Falkirk and Stirling are the largest.

NHS Forth Valley operates a single system of health care comprising acute services and three community health partnerships (CHPs). Each CHP covers a geographical area with co-terminus boundaries to the three local authorities within NHS Forth Valley: Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling councils.

Mental health services for the NHS board are hosted within the Clackmannanshire CHP. NHS Forth Valley provides adult mental health services across the whole spectrum from acute hospital care to community services, including: an intensive home treatment team; acute admission and assessment services; an IPCU; liaison psychiatry services; inpatient and community rehabilitation services and day hospitals; community mental health teams; and a low secure unit.

Adult mental health acute and rehabilitation inpatient services are provided as follows.

NHS Forth Valley	
Bellsdyke Hospital, Larbert	Number of beds
Mental health rehabilitation	47
Low secure mental health rehabilitation	24
Craighall, Falkirk	Number of beds
Mental health rehabilitation	14
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	Number of beds
Acute mental health admissions	53
Child and adolescent mental health service – inpatient beds	0 (provided by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)
IPCU	12

2 Intensive psychiatric care unit provision

There is one IPCU in NHS Forth Valley, within Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary. The IPCU covers all of NHS Forth Valley and has a total of 12 inpatient beds which are all provided as single bedrooms. The IPCU is located in close proximity to the general adult acute mental health wards which allows for flexibility in the care offered in terms of staffing, knowledge of patients and provision of beds.

NHS Forth Valley highlighted that there are three national prisons in the local area which can lead to a high number of admissions to the IPCU from the prison service. As a result of this, the unit is generally unable to accept referrals from outwith the NHS board area.

NHS Forth Valley reported that the need to transfer patients to an IPCU outwith the board area rarely arises.

2.1 Admission to IPCU

The IPCU accepts both male and female patients over the age of 18. There is an admissions protocol in place which outlines the procedure for admission to the IPCU. There are no formalised exclusion criteria. The system for referral and admission is flexible and is based on case-by-case discussions between the nursing and medical staff with the needs of the patient at the centre of all decision-making.

On admission to the IPCU, a full patient induction is undertaken which aims to ensure that the patient has support from family and/or a carer representative. It is also clearly stated within the admission protocol that the immediate needs of a patient must be determined within 15 minutes of admission to the IPCU and that patients will be introduced to their named nurse within 2 hours of admission. There is also a protocol in place within NHS Forth Valley which details the procedure in cases where an admission bed is not available within the relevant sector admission ward. This protocol covers all acute mental health admission wards.

2.2 Model of care provision

The IPCU is led by a single consultant psychiatrist and there is multidisciplinary team input to the ward. The consultant's time is generally divided equally between the IPCU and the forensic service, as is the time of the junior doctor. Close contact is also maintained with the sector team when a patient is admitted to the IPCU. Staffing across the acute mental health service in NHS Forth Valley is provided on a rotational basis across the range of wards which allows for greater flexibility and understanding of connected services.

Individual and group activities are offered to patients through an occupational therapist who is based at the IPCU 3 days each week. A physiotherapist is available by referral only, as is access to psychology and pharmacy services.

IPCU staffing profile at NHS Forth Valley		Whole time equivalent (WTE)
Medical	Consultant psychiatrist	0.5
	Junior doctor	0.4
Nursing	30 WTE registered and unregistered:	
	Band 7	1
	Band 6	1
	Band 5	15
	Band 2 (unregistered nursing assistant)	13
Allied health professionals	Occupational therapist	0.5
	Physiotherapist	Referral only
	Art Therapist	Referral only

IPCU staffing profile in NHS Forth Valley (continued)		Whole time equivalent (WTE)
Social work	Mental health officer	As required
	Social worker	As required
Pharmacy	Pharmacist	0.2
Psychology	Psychologist	Referral only
Administrative staff	Administrative officer	0.4

The usual nursing complement on the ward for any day shift is five; this would include a minimum of two registered staff. Overnight, this may drop to four staff, again with a minimum of two registered. At the time of the service profiling exercise, all of the nursing staff complement had more than one year's mental health nursing experience. There is always a minimum of one male and one female member of staff during each shift.

Student nurses are employed and there is also an experienced nurse bank staff member available in the event of any staff shortages. At the time of the service profiling exercise, NHS Forth Valley reported no current vacancies within the IPCU nursing team.

2.3 Discharge from IPCU

NHS Forth Valley has a discharge planning procedure for the IPCU through a policy which aims to deliver the commitments outlined in the mental health service discharge protocol. The policy does not include a requirement for assessment of carers' needs to be carried out before discharge. In practice, each case is dealt with on an individual basis and will depend on the needs identified in the patient's assessment and care plan. Transfer between the IPCU and the acute wards can be flexible depending on case-by-case clinical judgement of staff.

3 Demographics

The total adult population aged 18–64 served by the IPCU is approximately 181,207.

3.1 Numbers of IPCU admissions

There were 91 admissions to the IPCU in the year ending 31 March 2009. It was noted that the total of 91 includes direct admissions only and does not reflect people who were transferred from the acute wards. Five patients were admitted from outside the NHS board area. The IPCU occupancy rate was, on average, approximately 50% over the last year.

3.2 Nature of admissions

It was noted that, due to its location in central Scotland, the IPCU receives many requests from across Scotland to admit patients to the facility. The IPCU consultant is in charge of the referral service in conjunction with the

consultant in the referring area. The liaison psychiatry service has guidelines in place for the assessment and subsequent admission of patients from Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary. Out-of-area admissions are not accepted during out-of-hours. Where possible, the last two beds would ideally be kept exclusively for the use of Forth Valley patients in times of emergency.

NHS Forth Valley expressed concern over the lack of out-of-hours provision for acute mental health services. Patients are often admitted to IPCU during these times if no other adequate provision can be found.

The 91 admissions to the IPCU can be further broken down as follows.

IPCU admissions to NHS Forth Valley in 2008		
Age	Under 18	8
	18–30	26
	31–50	47
	51–65	10
	Over 65	0
Gender	Male	64
	Female	27
Ethnicity	White Scottish	10
	White British	3
	White other	3
	Chinese	1
	Refused	1
	Not known/specified	73
Detention status	Civil law	39
	Criminal law	11
	Informal (elective)	41
Out-of-area referrals	Formal agreement	5
	No formal agreement	0

As previously reported, female patients are admitted to the IPCU. All rooms have en-suite shower and toilet facilities. Although there is no separate section of the ward for female patients, these patients would be under close observation at all times. No other gender-specific rooms, such as dining rooms were available at the time of the service profiling exercise. Separate living areas for females are planned for the new acute hospital in Larbert.

3.3 Management of other population groups

Staff at the IPCU remarked on the strong links with the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). Patients under the age of 18 are only admitted in an emergency situation and would be closely observed on an individual basis during their time on the ward.

The IPCU may also admit patients over the age of 65 out-of-hours, as the older people's service in NHS Forth Valley does not have an IPCU facility specifically for older adults.

Similarly, people with learning disabilities may be admitted to the IPCU out-of-hours until a transfer can be made.

4 Links with other secure mental health provision

NHS Forth Valley provides a low secure rehabilitation unit. The low secure rehabilitation unit is flexible in terms of accepting patients from all wards, including who may be stepping down from The State Hospital.

Forensic patients are admitted to the IPCU, but generally in small numbers of one or two at a time. A risk assessment would be undertaken for any forensic patients ahead of their admission to the IPCU. Patients in need of medium secure psychiatric care are transferred to the Orchard Clinic, Edinburgh.

5 Governance arrangements

The latest draft of the operational policy, which covers all acute mental health services, was under review at the time of the service profiling exercise. This policy is being developed as part of the New Models of Care pilot across NHS Forth Valley, for which there is a planning group with user and carer representation.

A dialectical behaviour therapy programme is now being run within the IPCU which is also aimed at improving specific data on admissions. Staff identified training on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) as a priority for the future with sessions for staff having commenced and more planned.

6 Plans for service development

A new acute hospital is planned to open in August 2010 in Larbert. This will include a purpose-built 12-bedded IPCU.

7 Other points to note

Staff at the IPCU in NHS Forth Valley were very much looking forward to the new build at Larbert where it was anticipated a great improvement in surroundings will be achieved. The new unit will also have greater flexibility for the segregation of male and female patients which is not always possible at present.

A police liaison officer works closely with the IPCU and this integrated approach allows for the flexible sharing of information between parties. Also noted was the way in which the Procurator Fiscal is invited to attend suicide review meetings held at the unit.

An innovative approach has been taken to managing the flow of patients between general adult psychiatry and forensic services. Patients are assessed in terms of risk, as opposed to having strict labels attached to them.

NHS Forth Valley operates focus groups for users and carers that meet on a regular basis. Good communications and relationships between different parts of the service were also highlighted.

Appendix 1 – Glossary of abbreviations

Abbreviation

CAMHS	child and adolescent mental health service
CHP	community health partnership
IPCU	intensive psychiatric care unit
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NHS	National Health Service
NHS QIS	NHS Quality Improvement Scotland
WTE	whole time equivalent