

Mental Health of Older Adults and Dementia Clinical Academic Group (CAG)

Introduction

The Southwark Mental Health of Older Adults Service is designed to provide a secondary mental health service to older adults with complex mental health problems and also to persons of any age with severe dementia. The Southwark service accepts on average about 600 people a year and holds a similar number of people on the caseload at any one time. The service comprises of the following clinical services:

- Specialist Acute Hospital Liaison into Kings College Hospital
- A Community Mental Health Service currently comprising of 2 Community Mental Health Teams
- The Southwark and Lambeth Memory Service
- Acute Inpatient services
- NHS Continuing Care Service

The details of these services are as follows:

Acute Hospital Liaison

A small specialist team is located at Kings College and comprising of a consultant psychiatrist, medical staff, and psychiatric nurses. The role of the teams is to provide specialist advice and support to the acute wards and providing links between the MHOA services and the acute wards.

The service is contracted to provide approximately 177 referrals from the medical wards per annum.

Community Mental Health Teams

There are 2 teams located in the north and the south of the borough and operate between 9-5, Monday to Friday.

The aim of the teams is to support people at home and they are commissioned to provide a caseload of approximately 656 patients.

Memory Services

The Memory service covers Lambeth and Southwark and was newly commissioned in 2010. This service provides an assessment service for people who require a diagnosis of dementia at an early stage of the condition.

Acute Inpatient Beds

The service has access to psychiatric beds at the Maudsley Hospital where there are two Older Adults inpatient wards. There are also beds available for use in the Ladywell Unit in Lewisham and at

the Bethlem Hospital should additional places be required. The number of admissions caused by a crisis is very low as usually admissions are planned. Admission is usually for those whose behaviour or psychiatric illness has deteriorated to a point where the Community Mental Health Teams cannot look after them safely or when informal carers are unable to cope. Usually patients from Southwark will be admitted to the Maudsley but on occasion if there are no beds available there, they will be admitted to other Mental Health of Older Adults wards.

The service is currently commissioned to provide 4462 occupied bed days or approximately 12 beds worth of activity. This equates to approximately 1 Southwark admission a week on average. At present there have been no problems admitting patients as the service has had enough capacity. Current occupancy across all of the inpatient wards is approximately 88% and currently the service has 11 empty beds.

Continuing Care Services

There are 2 continuing care units located in Southwark which provide fully funded NHS continuing care. Patients will only be admitted if agreement has been given by the Southwark Continuing Care Panel comprising of NHS and Social Services Commissioners.

The 2 units in question are the Becket Unit and Ann Moss. The Becket Unit is located in Greenhive Care home run by Anchor Housing and service has plans to move this service to a SLaM owned property near the Elephant and Castle. This will allow the service to function more effectively as in its current location it not permitted to detain residents under the Mental Health Act.

The second unit is located in Rotherhithe in Ann Moss Way. Together these units are commissioned to provide 6085 occupied bed days or 17 beds worth of activity.

Plans for Development

The Mental Health of Older Adults Service is aware that its current model for the Community Teams will need improving in order to become more responsive to need.

In particular, the service would like to develop capacity to provide support to people in their homes at weekends and evenings. The service is therefore developing proposals to develop a Home Treatment model for older people similar to the service available for adults of working age. Older Adults Home Treatment Teams have been developed successfully in Westminster and Merton in London and in Wolverhampton and East Anglia. The benefits of this team will be to support people who develop acute behaviours in their homes settings more effectively than the community teams are able to. If this model is successful it will reduce the number of crisis admissions to acute beds. It will also mean that older people will be able to access a similar service to that provided to adults of working age whereas in the past access was restricted because of age criteria.

The service believes this can be funded by reducing the number of inpatient beds it provides as outlined above and is discussing the development of this model with commissioners.

In addition, SLaM is working with NHS Southwark and Primary Care to review the current interface between primary care health services and the secondary care service provided by the Mental Health of Older Adults Service. In particular we want to see whether there are alternative models of care that can be introduced that work better for patients and are more cost effective. One option under consideration may be the development of a high intensity community service provided by SLaM and a low intensity service commissioned by NHS Southwark. These discussions are at an early stage.

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