

## **Commissioning Psychiatric Intensive (PICU) Care Beds across the Pennine Care Footprint**

### **Background**

#### **What is a PICU?**

A Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) is a type of psychiatric in-patient ward. On these wards staffing levels are higher than on a normal acute admission ward. Many PICUs also have a seclusion room and most PICUs are single gender.

PICUs are designed to look after patients who cannot be managed on open (unlocked) psychiatric wards due to the level of risk the patient poses to themselves or others, acute levels of distress, absconding risk and suicidal or challenging behaviour. The patient's length of stay is normally short (a few weeks) rather than prolonged as the patient should be treated and returned to an open ward as soon as their mental state is stable.

PICU wards specialise in the assessment and comprehensive treatment of people with a broad spectrum of acute and enduring mental health needs. They provide care and treatment to inpatients who are experiencing the most acute phase of a mental illness.

PICU services are designed and delivered in line with national guidance, including the physical environment, numbers of beds, staffing ratios and disciplines, and the interventions provided.

#### **Service provision**

There is currently no local female PICU provided by PCFT. PCFT and commissioners have been working collaboratively to develop a local solution over a number of years. Currently the CCG commissioners sub-contract 4 female PICU beds from The Priory, Cheadle Royal, sub-contracted via PCFT.

PCFT are commissioned to provide the current male PICU service, which is provided in the Cobden unit in Stockport. This is a 10 bedded-unit, providing intensive care for male patients only and provides PICU services for patients across all PCFT boroughs (Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Glossop). There is very limited choice given with regards to placement unless this is linked to safeguarding. The service has a seclusion room facility. All patients are transferred via secure transport (ambulance) with a team of specially trained staff.

In order to access the PICU services patients are referred to a central team who review the patient's current presentation and interventions attempted, eg: change to medication and management of the patient. This is in attempt to maintain the patients in the least restrictive environment and in a unit that is close to home.

If there is more demand than the 4 female beds in Cheadle and 10 male beds in Stockport can meet, then patients are placed out of area, sometimes as far as Northampton or Essex, which presents problems for patients, their families and staff supporting them. In addition, seeking assurance that good quality care is provided presents a problem as patients are placed so far away.

In February 2017, there was agreement from both Pennine Care and the five principle CCGs to progress with a project to commission female PICU beds provided by PCFT within the geographical footprint. In order to facilitate this PCFT, with commissioner support, bid for and was successful in obtaining agreement in principle for national capital monies to develop estates to support the development of female PICU services within the PCFT footprint.

The Trust and CCG commissioners aspire to develop a female PICU provision in the footprint and subsequently end the contract with The Priory and provide the services 'in house'.

## **Proposal**

The Trust submitted a bid to NHS Improvement for a £4.5 million capital development for the purposes of female PICU services. In order to make best use of estates it is proposed that the current PCFT vacant ward in the basement area of the Buckton Building at Tameside General Hospital is demolished and rebuilt as a 12 bedded male PICU service and the men are transferred from Stockport to Tameside.

The current male PICU unit (Cobden Unit at Stepping Hill Hospital) will be redeveloped into a 10 bedded female PICU Unit. The rationale of developing the female unit in Stockport is to maintain the bed base at 10 beds (considered the largest number of beds for a female unit) and also moving the male provision to Tameside would link the PICU unit with the existing male Low Secure Unit (Tatton Unit) which is also based in the basement area of the Buckton Building at Tameside General, which supports sharing of staff expertise and expert response teams.

### **Next Steps**

The Trust is currently developing a full business case to be submitted to NHS Improvement to gain full commitment to the capital investment agreed in principle.

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7 October 2019