

## Shared forensic clinical pathways

### South London Mental Health and Community Partnership

#### What was the aim?

The South London Partnership (SLP) needed new clinical pathways when it took on responsibility for assessment, commissioning and care management of people who use forensic services. Its three trusts – Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust – previously had no established common forensic pathways. This contributed to inconsistent care plans, approaches to placements and care packages.

#### What was the solution?

Five new pathways were developed, reflecting the core forensic patient groups. These are deployed consistently across SLP, for assessing and managing new referrals and existing service users (often in long-term, out-of-area inpatient settings).

The new pathways were women's, acute, assertive rehabilitation, community and specialist. Clinicians from each trust developed them, with input from service users and their families ('experts by experience'), operational managers and other frontline inpatient and community mental health team colleagues. They make possible proactive case management, rehabilitation and recovery, 'step down' and discharge.

#### What were the challenges?

The trusts – and individual consultants – had taken different approaches to managing these patients, including discharge pathways. Community teams needed to be ready for people discharged to their care. Some new pathways meant changes for service users who had experienced long stays – for example, in out-of-area accommodation.

## What were the results?

People requiring forensic services are now assessed and managed through the pathways. Of the 128 new referrals received by SLP's new central hub in its first nine months, 59% were managed through the acute pathway. Many were first referrals from prisons, previously often placed out of area immediately.

New placements outside the SLP area reduced from 84 in 2016/17 to 18 in 2017/18.

Further clinical outcome evaluation is underway, including via follow-up assessments and HONOS (Health of the Nation outcome scores). Care closer to people's homes and communities brings improved quality of life and care outcomes.

This work contributed to a £2.6 million saving during the year, enabling reinvestment in local community mental services.

## What were the learning points?

Equal representation from all three trusts in developing the pathways was vital to understand the current situation, agree new pathways and secure sign-up. The clinical lead, deputy roles and membership of pathway clinical groups reflect all three trusts to enable ongoing joint working.

## Next steps

SLP is developing a further shared forensic pathway for court liaison and diversion. The model is being adopted for SLP's complex care programme.

## Want to know more?

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