

PE1471/U

NHS Forth Valley

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Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament

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Your Ref pe1471
Our Ref

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Scottish Parliament Public Petition on Young People's Hospital Wards

Response from NHS Forth Valley

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Petition PE1471 – Young People's Hospital Wards, name of Petitioner Rachael McCully MSYP, on behalf of Scottish Youth Parliament.

The Paediatric Service within NHS Forth Valley fully support the main points discussed within the petition and strongly support the petitioner's opinion that young people between the ages of 13 to 16 years, 16 to 21 years and 16 to 25 years should receive care within an age appropriate environment within the hospital setting, from staff who have been specifically trained in the care needs of adolescents.

The "National Delivery Plan for Children and Young People's Specialist Services" (2009) and "Better Health, Better Care: Hospital Services for Young People ((2009) recommends that children up to the age of 16 should receive age appropriate care within a hospital setting. NHS Forth Valley (NHSFV) currently provide inpatient paediatric services up to age 16 years and receive age appropriate care from a paediatric trained workforce. We endeavour to ensure that the adolescent group are nursed within a single room with en suite facilities. There is a full time teacher available to ensure that educational needs are met.

Caring for adolescents requires adequate training that includes the understanding of their emotional well being and mental health. NHSFV paediatric nursing staff have access to online modules in adolescent care within the Managed Knowledge Network and the Royal College of Nursing core competency booklet, however we recognise that our workforce would benefit from additional training to ensure that they have the appropriate enhanced skill set to care for the adolescent group. Currently there are insufficient training modules available for all staff. We strongly believe that increased practical, clinical training would benefit and improve care and services for young people.

Paediatric medical staff including trainees are encouraged to access the Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health, Adolescent Health on line training course. This is also available to other specialties if there is an identified training need.



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Much of the specific health care to support adolescents involves awareness of their mental health needs and their vulnerability at a time of rapid developmental change when physical and fiscal maturity precedes emotional and cognitive maturity in individually variable ways. The challenges for young people with chronic disease are well recognised and there is strong evidence for the benefits of specific transition planning, care and continuity that involves both paediatric and adult specialist teams as described in the 'Think Transition' report of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and in the report of the NES conference on transitions in health care 2010. NHS Forth Valley staff have participated in the working groups for both of these projects and in the recent joint project with Bernardo's on involvement of young people in services for young people.

In addition to the deficiencies identified in the original petition from the SGYP, the specific needs of adolescents with mental disorders who require hospital admission have been highlighted by the mental Health Commission who report on the potential risks and adverse effects of admitting young people to adult mental health facilities. The number of inpatient adolescent beds in Scotland is very limited.

It is also important to consider workforce planning for the future and consider the skill mix of registered nursing staff within the paediatric team. Forward planning should support the redesign of the nursing workforce to include general trained and /or mental health nurses to supplement the skills required within the clinical setting for this particular group.

The further development of the identified inpatient area, with staff that have the relevant extended skills would facilitate this improvement in quality of service and offer an opportunity for genuine sharing and transfer of knowledge and expertise through a skill mix of paediatric, adult, mental health, education and social work professionals. This is of particular relevance for young people who are or have been in care whose move to independent living poses challenges in all areas of life and whose vulnerability in physical and mental health is recognised and highlighted by the Scottish Government in its policies on Looked After and Accommodated Children and those leaving care.

We hope that our comments are helpful to the committee's consideration of the petition.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Mackenzie
Chief Executive