



Warrington mental
health forum 

The logo for the Warrington Mental Health Forum features a stylized sun with rays above a white cloud.

**Warrington Local Involvement Network working in
partnership with the Warrington Mental Health Forum**

Report on the Warrington A&E Liaison Service

October 2010

**Produced by the Warrington LINK and the Warrington
Mental Health Forum**

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Aim

The aim of this report is to record the issues raised with both the Warrington LINK and the Warrington Mental Health Forum around the Mental Health Liaison Service at Warrington Hospital A&E. The report aims to feed in recommendations about the service to Commissioners at NHS Warrington, staff at Warrington and Halton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (WHHFT) and 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust (5BPS). And also seeks clarity on the future funding of the service.

Background to Service

¹A local review was agreed in September 2008, to seek to re-model adult A&E mental health liaison service provision in Warrington, with a specific focus on reducing A&E admissions and length of stays. The A&E Mental Health Liaison Service was provided by 5 Borough's Partnership NHS Trust and operated Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Patients with complex needs such as mental health, drug and alcohol problems who present to A&E in crisis will often require a longer than average observation period to assess their mental state and associated risks. This can result in a breach of the national 4 hour A&E admission & discharge target.

At this time (September 2008) the local demand in Warrington for patients requiring a mental health assessment had highlighted up to 2 to 3 people can present daily to A&E during out of hours and up to 1 person in day hours. Length of stay data over a 3 year period had highlighted around 75% of patients admitted to A&E with mental health and mental health related drug and alcohol related codes were discharged on the same day or within a 1 day stay. Improving the early detection and management of A&E mental health admissions would reduce the number of non appropriate admissions and associated costs.

Warrington LINK and Mental Health Forum Involvement

Issues raised by the Warrington Mental Health Forum in December 2008 on why people might attend A&E instead of going to their GP included:

- “No personal face to face contact in out of hours, i.e. 11pm to 4 am”
- “Not knowing alternative phone number to GP”
- “No confidence that contacting GP will offer help”

Comments received by the Warrington LINK at this time regarding the service included

- “On more than one occasion YMCA staff have sat with patients with mental health problems in A&E while they wait to be seen. At present

¹ Taken from ‘Developing an integrated A&E Liaison Service in Warrington for individuals deemed at risk from mental health, drug and alcohol misuse ‘ April 2009 presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

the understanding of the 'Mental Health model' being used to see patients at A&E is not appropriate and can be disempowering to the patient. On several occasions when a YMCA staff member has rung up A&E regarding a person with mental health problems being treated, they have been told they will be treated but only if a member of staff accompanies them. This is obviously not always possible and does not seem to offer an equitable access of service."

Evidence: Comment cards. Feedback from YMCA 2009

There proved to be a need for looking at the appropriateness of the service and for the extension of the current provision.

Pilot

A pilot extending the service was run from December 2009 – May 2010, funded by 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. During this pilot the service was extended to 9am – midnight with 4 Psychiatric Nurses, 7 days a week. After midnight there was a phone line that links to an on call Psychiatric Consultant at 5BPS, who covers A&E at Warrington Hospital and Warrington and Halton 5BPS inpatient sites. The Liaison Service will see patients from 17 onwards with no organic illness. The patient has to be medically fit before referred for assessment. They are then seen by the nurse on duty from the M.H Liaison Team, a face to face assessment is carried out and a decision is made and a crisis plan provided about how best to support /treat the person. A copy of the assessment is sent to the GP.

The pilot ended May 2010, 5BPS agreed to continue to offer the service on a monthly basis until July 2010, when they then agreed to run the service for a further 6 months. Discussions about the future funding of the service are still ongoing between NHS Warrington and Warrington and Halton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Success of the Pilot

Below is the statistical summary of the pilot from October 2009 to June 2010.

	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Apr-10	May-10	Jun-10	Total
Total Number of Patients Seen	40	56	69	65	107	115	113	97	75	737
Number of Category A Patients*	12	14	25	19	43	34	51	28	29	255
Number of Category B Patients**	28	42	44	46	64	81	62	69	46	482
% of Category A patients who avoided Admission	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.0%
% of Category B patients who avoided Admission	11%	12%	9%	4%	11%	14%	10%	3%	15%	9.8%
% of Category B patients referred and Assessed within 1 hour	67.9%	81.0%	79.5%	69.6%	73.4%	72.8%	72.6%	84.1%	80.4%	75.9%

*Category A = Patients with Mental Illness and no Physical Problems

** Category B = Patients with both Physical and Mental Illness

From the statistics it can be seen that all patients (255) who accessed the service with a mental illness but no physical problem avoided being admitted to hospital. The average number of people who accessed the service with both physical and mental illness and avoided being admitted was 47 (9.8%). Whilst the average number of category B patients that were referred and assessed within one hour was 365 (75.9%).

The LINK received a comment from 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust in support of the services.

“The pilot has demonstrated the significant benefits to patients of an extended psychiatric A&E Liaison service in Warrington. We are working closely with Warrington NHS and Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to try to resolve funding for this service.” 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Visit to Service

Visit on Monday 14th June 2010

A visit to the service at Warrington Hospital was undertaken with the LINKs Community Engagement Officer, Mental Health Service User Development Worker and 2 members of the Warrington Mental Health Forum. The main issues raised at the visit were;

- inconsistency of the information given to the staff of the Liaison Team,
- the need for mental health training to be given to all A&E staff including reception staff,
- the room where the assessments were being carried out was thought not to be fit for purpose. The room was very unwelcoming and also echoed, which could be off putting for patients.
- There also seemed to be an issue with lack of communications at times between the rest of the A&E department and the Mental Health Liaison Team, with examples being given of the assessment room being used as the Swine Flu room with no consultation with staff.

Issues and Concerns

Issues raised by Groups and Individuals

Issues and comments have been received regarding the service. Examples of these are below.

Issues raised by the YMCA,

- People being discharged from A&E with informal bits of paper, with out-of-date information
- Length of waiting time for Mental Health assessment at A&E.
- Patients need information about the process. Are there information leaflets available at A&E i.e. coping with stress, anxiety etc?
- Needs greater transparency, patients need to know what is going to happen

Individual comments received by the Warrington LINK include:

- 2 different patients presenting at A&E after midnight and both being told they would have to wait until 9am to be seen. Both patients left and went home.
- The treatment room is not suitable; it is unwelcoming and feels more like a prison. Lessons could be learnt from the Bereavement Room in Warrington Hospital.

Possibility of Moving Service

There is a possibility of the service moving from its current position, in line with a review of the whole A&E service. When this was discussed at the visit on 14th June staff were unaware of this, which again raises the issue of communication between the Liaison Team and the hospital trust. It is also felt that perhaps service users and staff should be consulted on where they feel is the most appropriate place for the service.

Funding

There are currently ongoing discussions with NHS Warrington, Warrington and Halton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust regarding the future funding of the service. There is a commitment from 5BPS and the hospital trust that there is a need for the service and 5BPS will continue to run the service until January 2011.

Obviously this is not an ideal situation for the Liaison Team and other A&E staff who all remain uncertain about the future of the service.

Recommendations

- The funding for the service needs to be secured as soon as possible, with the possibility of joint funding
- Mental Health training to be given to all A&E staff, including reception staff. Contact details for some basic Mental Health training, provided by NHS Warrington, has been passed to the Mental Health Liaison Nurse.
- More awareness of the service and especially awareness of the use of the on call Psychologist Consultant after midnight to all staff
- More information available at A&E i.e. coping with stress etc
- To ensure that appropriate, up to date information is given to all patients that are discharged
- Improved communication between Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust staff and the staff who work in the Mental Health Liaison Team
- If there is to be a relocation of the service , we would strongly recommend that consultation with staff and service users takes place
- If the service is not relocated, the appropriateness of the current assessment room should be considered, again with consultation with staff. Maybe using the Bereavement Room as a good example

Conclusion

The services that are on offer at present are good, this is supported by the commitment of both 5BPS and WHHFT to continue to offer the service. The service seems to be offering a good provision to patients with mental health problems, this again supported by the comments from 5BPS and also by the statistics of the pilot. However as this report highlights there are some concerns with aspects of the service which do need to be addressed.

Catherine Beardshaw, Chief Executive of WHHFT, invited us to meet with her to discuss the issues raised in the report. There was a commitment to review the recommendations and organise another meeting to discuss them further.

Next steps

- Share the report with Commissioners at NHS Warrington, staff at Warrington and Halton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust, also Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Health and Wellbeing and the Mental Health Partnership Board. To also share the report with the Adult Safeguarding Board via the Voluntary Sector representative. The report will also be shared with the Care Quality Commission.
- Shadowing of a Mental Health Nurse over a shift.

- Follow up meeting with Trust staff and a further report on the service to be completed in 2 months to review the progress of the recommendations.

Appendix 1

Warrington LINK – Is an independent organisation set up by the Department of Health aiming to improve health and social care services by gaining people's views and experiences. The LINKs main job is to find out what people's issues are and bring interested groups and individuals together to look at these. The LINK has statutory powers to enter and view NHS premises, feed back issues and reports to Commissioners and Service Providers and receive a reply within 20 days. The LINK can also refer any issues to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. For more information contact:

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Warrington Mental Health Forum - Open, welcoming forum for anyone affected by any kind of mental health condition. The forum meet every month and provides an opportunity to meet new people and share experiences, gain information about local services and have your say about services. For more information contact:

Community Engagement Team

Warrington Borough Council

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