Priory Hospital
Kneesworth House –
Wimpole Ward
Specialist Low Secure, personality disorder service for females
Wimpole Ward is a 15-bedded specialist service dedicated to supporting females with personality disorders. Our aim is to support patients in acquiring the skills to effectively manage their emotions, tolerate distress and reduce risk to self and others.

We empower patients to become more independent within a welcoming, safe and the least restrictive environment possible.

Service overview

This service offers a recovery-focused programme using a positive and inclusive approach. The treatment model is centred on patient involvement, and combines multidisciplinary workings with dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT).

Involving patients in their treatment is an essential part of the model. They are able to collaborate with their team on treatment plans, behavioural support pathways, goal setting, as well as risk assessment and management plans.

We practice continuous informal dialogue in addition to the following formal meetings:

- Monthly reflective practice meetings
- Fortnightly multidisciplinary ward rounds
- Monthly ward rounds
- RC clinics twice weekly
- DBT consultations
- Monthly ward / clinical governance meetings
- Risk meetings
- Care Programme Approach (CPA) meetings

Carer involvement

Carers are also encouraged to get involved in the service where possible. They can attend CPA meetings on a six monthly basis and they are able to attend individual care reviews on an ad hoc basis.

We also engage our patients’ family and friends to attend family days and take part in surveys. We also help our patients maintain strong links with children involved, with tailored visiting arrangements.

The programme

The treatment model on Wimpole Ward combines multidisciplinary psychiatry with DBT. This effective and holistic approach combines the best of evidence-based therapies in order to promote recovery.

DBT combines cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques with mindfulness. At its core, DBT allows a person to experience validation of their behaviours and emotions, and to understand that in order to see change, they need to make skilled and deliberate decisions.

Our DBT therapy targets specific areas that people with personality disorders experience difficulties with, which include:

- The ability to correctly identify, label and regulate their current emotion
- Tolerating distress
- Managing crisis events
- Being more effective in interpersonal relationships
Our care pathway

Stage 1
First three months – assessment and formulation in conjunction with family, carers and patient.

Stage 2
Three to six months – tailoring DBT and reducing behaviour such as self-harm and anger.

Stage 3
Next six months – DBT will focus on learning how to experience, tolerate and regulate emotions, rather than being controlled by one’s emotions. Individual trauma therapy is also offered.

Stage 4
12-18 months – DBT will focus on experiencing the ‘normal’ emotions of everyday life and will practice transferring new skills into everyday situations.

The programme usually lasts for up to 18 months in duration, after which, we aim to progress all patients to a rehabilitation or community-based setting.

Discharge pathway

Stepping down usually involves transitioning to a rehabilitation service or community placement. This can include:

- Hospital rehabilitation
- Supported housing
- Independent living
- Back to family or carers

We maintain close links with care co-ordinators and commissioners and other relevant agencies – keeping them engaged throughout, both informally and more formally, via the CPA process and reporting structures. We believe that this is vital to ensure timely, effective, safe and sustainable recovery beyond a patient’s stay at Wimpole Ward.

An environment suited to recovery

Set within 55 acres of attractive and tranquil grounds, the site offers an ideal location for patients to manage their personality disorder. Despite its more rural location, Kneesworth House also has good links to the local community of Royston, where patients have access to local amenities including the library and shops.

Wimpole Ward is part of Kneesworth House Hospital, a spacious hospital that offers patients access to facilities such as:

- A patient-led café
- Tennis courts
- Gym
- Activity room
- Family room
- Educational, vocational and occupational service (EVOS) centre
- Patient social club

We also provide an on-site independent advocacy service.
The team

Our multidisciplinary team (MDT) includes:

- Consultant psychiatrist
- Ward manager
- Registered psychologist / assistant psychologist
- Ward doctor
- Occupational therapist
- Social worker
- Registered mental health nurses (RMN)
- Registered general nurses (RGN)
- Therapy, care and healthcare assistants
- Access to a GP

Who do we support?

Wimpole Ward provides specialist care for:

- Females aged 18 years and over
- Patients who are detained under the Mental Health Act, with funding agreed by specialist commissioners, including those who are subject to transfer from prison or involved in the criminal justice system
- Those presenting with emotionally unstable personality disorder (EUPD)
- Patients who may also present with co-morbidities such as trauma, psychosis, Asperger's syndrome and eating disorders

The service is unsuitable for people with:

- Primary diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder
- Instrumentally violent behaviour
- A history of severely undermining therapeutic milieus, security breaches or significant violence
- A level of cognitive functioning that would compromise their ability to understand the concepts of DBT and limit their ability to engage meaningfully in the programme

Referrals and admissions

The assessment process is completed in two stages:

Stage 1

A senior clinician from Wimpole Ward will review the referral and if the patient is deemed appropriate for our service, a face-to-face assessment meeting will take place. The patient may also be invited to Wimpole Ward for a day visit.

Stage 2

This typically involves further interviews and assessments which take place during their site visit to Wimpole Ward. The patient will be briefed in more detail about the treatment model, expectations of commitment, and more importantly what they can expect from us in return.

Following the successful completion of Stages 1 and 2, the decision about placement is made.

Referrals are accepted from across the UK.

Our location

Kneesworth House Hospital, Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 5JP

Find out more

For more information or to discuss how we can help, please contact our admissions department by:

Telephone: 01444 231 000
Email: prioryenquiries@nhs.net
Web: www.priorygroup.com/kneesworth-house