

The Aster Unit

Specialist pathway for women with a personality disorder, mental health problem and complex needs

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Overview of the Service

The Aster Unit is a small high intensity rehabilitation service which supports women over the age of 18 who have complex emotional and mental health problems associated with significant risk behaviours. Typically they have a diagnosis of personality disorder or mental illness. With a speedy assessment process, The Aster Unit offers short term stabilisation, personalised assessment, engagement and treatment for women who may benefit from a short inpatient stay.



Model of Care

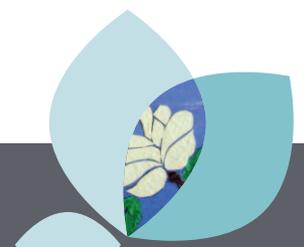
Although The Aster Unit is completely self-contained and separate to the low secure unit, it draws on Farndon Unit's award winning therapies. The whole team use a psychologically informed approach underpinned by a framework of Compassion Focussed Therapy (CFT) and trauma sensitive care as well as having extensive knowledge of attachment theory.

All staff are trained in the implementation of the Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) Model. This model is evidenced based and leads to greater benefits for both patients and staff in supporting behaviours which may challenge.

Many of the those we support have experienced trauma, because of this we focus on maintaining an environment in which

they feel safe, supported and understood in a time of crisis. Once stabilised, the focus of treatment is to help patients develop emotional management and progress to more self-reliance with a stronger sense of self-compassion and self-efficacy to allow greater understanding of behaviours and promote less maladaptive coping strategies.

Treatment plans are psychologically informed with a holistic formulation, delivered by a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) who have a wealth of experience and work collaboratively with the patient and commissioners to deliver personalised treatment programmes and adaptable care pathways.





The unit team takes a proactive and formulation based approach to risk assessment for self-harm and enhanced observations, it is acknowledged that these behaviours often manifest as alternative ways of coping as well as creating over dependence upon others to maintain safety. Through collaboration and individual PBS plans the reliance on enhanced 1-1 observations is reduced. We use the least restrictive approaches to behaviours in order to create a trusting therapeutic relationship within a robust environment. This gives patients a sense of safety to shift toward personal autonomy allowing them to safely manage themselves when not on observations.

Outcomes and Benefits

The Aster Unit aims to support women to:

- Reduce risks around self-harm and other risky behaviours
- Stabilise presentation and regulate emotions
- Promote insight, self-awareness and self-reliance
- Prepare to engage in more structured therapy in a rehabilitation setting or move on back into the community

Patient Profile

The Aster Unit would suit:

- Women aged over 18 years
- Women with a diagnosis of personality disorder, particularly EUPD
- Detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007)
- Diagnosed with a mental health problem
- May have a secondary diagnosis of mild learning disability
- Cannot safely be supported in the community at the current time
- Significant and current self-harm
- May require additional one to one support
- May have a past history of trauma, abuse, attachment issues
- May have a forensic history
- Referrals are accepted from acute psychiatric inpatient units, PICUs and forensic units.

Community Integration and Discharge Preparation

Patients accessing The Aster Unit may access the community as soon as their risks and behaviours are safely managed to enable them to do so. Discharge is planned on admission and focused around risk reduction and readiness to return directly to the community or moving on to a more structured rehabilitation programme. People may move on to one of our local units, Field House in Derbyshire or Ballington House in Staffordshire.

Environment

The Aster Unit is within The Farndon Hospital which is ideally situated within a greenbelt area with excellent transport links in close proximity to the local town centre and amenities. The ward environment is safe and robust and each patient has a private en-suite bedroom, which can be personalised.

