

## Document Control

<b>Title</b> <b>Admission of a Young Person less than 18 years to Acute Adult Care Wards Standard Operating Procedure</b>			
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### 1. Background

- 1.1.** Admission, planned or unplanned to the acute care environment can be distressing experience for the patient and their family.
- 1.2.** The National Service Framework (DH 1999) states ‘if a bed in an adolescent unit cannot be located for a young person but admission is essential then care may be provided on an adult ward’. The legal duty does not mean that there should be no circumstance where a young person may be admitted to an adult ward. It is conceivable that particular specialist needs of such a patient would make placement on an adult ward the most appropriate arrangement.

Children and Young People are generally cared for on Caroline Thorpe Ward. Beds are limited to 16 and Northern Devon Healthcare Trust does not have an adolescent ward. It may therefore not always be possible to admit to Caroline Thorpe Ward; for example:

- Clinical need
  - During major incident or escalation
  - If there are insufficient beds available
  - If their lifestyle is better suited to an adult ward
  - If the child or young person is a potential danger to themselves or others and a safer option would be admission to an adult ward.
  - If over 16, patient choice
- 1.3.** This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to enable staff to make a decision to admit a young person to an acute adult care ward based on clinical need, availability of side room and facilities to accommodate a young person and to ensure that expert knowledge is available to care for the patient in that ward.

### 2. Purpose

This SOP has been written to:

Identify the procedure for the assessment and delivery of care to a young person less than 18 years of age in an acute care ward, be it a young person with mental health issues or without. Admissions of this nature should be in accordance with policies and procedures that have been agreed and that means safeguarding the interests of the young person and ensuring medical expertise is available.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1.** This SOP relates to the following staff groups who may be involved in the assessment and delivery of care on the wards:
- Registered nurses
  - Medical staff
  - Ward pharmacist
  - Dietitian
  - Therapy teams
- 3.2.** This SOP will provide a structured framework to help staff comply with delivering optimal care once an informed decision is made as to whether a referral to the adult ward is necessary and the objectives are:
- Promote and protect the patient as well as the public's safety
  - Provide guidance to all staff that are caring for the young person and ensure staff are aware of patient safety and Trust Policies for Safeguarding.
  - To provide managers with clear guidelines on the placement of young person on their wards and individual risk assessments are completed to protect the young person from other patients.

### 4. Safety

- 4.1.** Staff undertaking this role will be able to demonstrate continued competence as per the organisations policy on assessing and maintaining competence. Staff must have access to expert help from paediatric services and CAMHS as required. Staff will also be familiar with the Trust's Enhanced Observation Policy where there are different levels of patient observation and how to apply these levels.
- 4.2.** If a young person has to be transferred to an adult ward, a Datix stating the reason for this transfer must be completed.
- 4.3.** Staff from the adult ward will inform the Paediatric team (this will be added to the handover sheet as an outlier to ensure awareness of the location of the young person and any potential management requirements)
- 4.4.** Safeguarding procedures should be followed where appropriate. This includes SCLF form, MASH referral and contacting the young person's named social worker as soon as possible. If admission is during out of hours the duty social services team may need to be informed.
- 4.5.** Ward staff including the Play Specialist and Hospital School Teaching will be available for support and guidance as required.
- 4.6.** Assurances that the British National Formulary for Children is available on adult wards so that staff can ensure medication decisions are correct.

- 4.7. Documentation used for a child or young person admitted to an adult ward will be that normally used on the adult ward including Early Warning Scores, Care Plans etc.
- 4.8. All children and young people admitted to an adult ward are monitored and reported in the NDHT Safeguarding Children Report at the NDHT Safeguarding Children Board quarterly.

## 5. Location

- 5.1. If a young person is assessed as being vulnerable within an adult setting, especially if specific risks have been identified, consideration should be given to increasing staffing levels to ensure their safety, including provision of a RMN if needed.
- 5.2. Whenever possible, the young person should be placed in a designated area where they can be cared for away from adult patient group. They should be protected from unwanted exposure including casual overlooking and over hearing. The patient and their family should be involved in decision making and planning.
- 5.3. Where problems of bed allocation cannot be resolved at ward level, the ward manager or nurse in charge should consult the Duty Manager (who is responsible for finding the most appropriate location for the patient).
- 5.4. Under 16 years  
A child or young person under the age of 16 years should generally be admitted to Caroline Thorpe Ward. If the child or young person has to be admitted to an adult ward, for a medical condition, and/or mental health, and/or safeguarding issue their management will remain with the named Consultant Paediatrician, (see also protocol on Assessment and Management of Children and Young People with Mental Health Needs).

If the child or young person is admitted to an adult setting for a surgical, trauma and orthopaedic or obstetric/gynaecology condition, management will continue with that service but with support from Paediatrics if there are mental health and/or safeguarding issues.

- 5.5. 16 to 18 years  
A young person of 16 to 18 years can be offered the choice to be admitted to Caroline Thorpe Ward or to an adult ward and transition to adult services will take place at that point if not already completed. Management will be by the adult team.

If a young person cannot be safely managed on Caroline Thorpe Ward, and must be admitted to an adult ward for a medical or surgical condition, their management will be provided by the adult medical or surgical team.

However:

- If there are safeguarding issues, these will be managed by the adult team (trained in Safeguarding Children Level 2), and with support from the Named Doctor for Safeguarding Children & Young People, Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children & Young People, or if out-of-hours, the Paediatric Consultant on-call, (see 5.5 and 5.6).
  - If there are mental health issues, these will be managed under the supervision of the Paediatric team, (see also protocol on Assessment and Management of Children and Young People with Mental Health Needs).
- 5.6.** Staff coming into contact with a young person during the course of their work should be provided with basic training/awareness in child protection and safeguarding training. Such training should be updated on a regular basis as per Trust Policy.
- 5.7.** Staff must be aware of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. All healthcare professionals must have access to information and advice from those designated to safeguard children, Dr Rebecca Rub - Named Doctor for Safeguarding Children & Young People and Anna Brimacombe - Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children & Young People.

## **6. References and Association Documentation**

- 6.1.** Assessment & Management of Children & Young People admitted with Mental Health Needs
- 6.2.** [Chaperone Policy 2016](#)
- 6.3.** Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- 6.4.** [Enhance Observation policy](#)
- 6.5.** Major Incident Policy
- 6.6.** [Mental Capacity Act \(MCA\) 2005](#)
- 6.7.** Mental Health Order 1986 Code of Practice:2015 Chapter 19 Children and Young People under the age of 18
- 6.8.** National Service Framework, Standard for Hospital Services page 8 (DH 2003)
- 6.9.** [Neonatal and Paediatric Ward Operational Policy](#)
- 6.10.** Outliers SOP
- 6.11.** [Safeguarding Children Policy](#)
- 6.12.** [Safeguarding Adults Policy](#)