Overview

Saffron ward is a 20-bed unit that provides specialist mental health care for people over the age of 65 who are experiencing delirium. It has been operating for just under one year.

The ward accepts patients as a step-down from acute physical health to provide the right care for their needs. Whilst a physical health condition can often be treated with ease, an ongoing confused state means older patients are too mentally unwell to return home, leading to an extended stay on a hospital ward. Saffron provides a viable alternative to this.

The Trust's Psychiatry Liaison (RAID) team in-reaches into the acute wards to identify suitable patients who can be transferred to Safford ward, helping to reduce acute length of stay and pressures.

Staffing

Saffron ward is staffed by an expert multi-disciplinary team including a GP, registered mental health nurses and general nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers, all with mental health experience.

Outcomes

Through the development of the Saffron ward model, Pennine Care has demonstrated that although this group of patients has relatively easily identified and treated physical medial conditions, they often remain in the most expensive part of the care system due to the complication of their continued confusion.

An intermediate community care model, consisting of an integrated multidisciplinary team with mental health experience and specialism, is ideal for managing this patient cohort in a cost effective way that achieves improved outcomes. It costs the NHS approximately £1,000 less per week for a patient to be on Saffron Ward than in hospital.

An economic study undertaken by Frontier Economics found that:
- 20 beds are available with 7,300 bed days of capacity per year – 6,706 have been occupied
- Saffron has a 92% reported occupancy rate
- Around 6,000 bed days have been deflected from acute wards over 2014/15
- Benefits exceeded costs by £0.55 million in 2014/15