

Improving outcomes for children and young people with severe mental health conditions

An economic assessment of the NHS Fife Child & Adolescent Mental Health Intensive Therapy Service

Understanding the service

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that everyone lives longer, healthier lives at home or in a homely setting and receives high quality healthcare, wherever this is delivered¹. For children and young people with severe mental health conditions this will mean being cared for effectively and safely in their own home or local community wherever this can be achieved, with any necessary hospital stays lasting for as short a time as possible. This study shows that NHS Fife's Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Intensive Therapy Service can support delivery of the Scottish Government's vision.

When NHS Fife closed its child and adolescent mental health inpatient unit in 2002, the board set up a new nurse-led Intensive Therapy Service (ITS) to provide personalised community-focused care for 8-18 year olds. Under the leadership of a Nurse Consultant, the ITS brought together nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists to offer high-intensity home-based support and therapy, which is tailored to meet the individual needs of young people and their family and carers.

In 2007/08 the NHS boards in Fife, Lothian and Borders reviewed the availability of regional CAMHS inpatient beds. Building on what they had learned from the ITS, these boards decided a better service would be provided if they invested more in Intensive Therapy Services, rather than increasing the number of hospital beds. The Scottish Government and the health boards provided joint funding to develop the ITS model.

The Fife ITS now provides core services from Monday to Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm, across the whole NHS Fife area. Additional services can also be provided out of hours as required. It places an emphasis on bringing together all the possible supports available to the young person – both professional and personal – to meet their needs.

The NHS Fife CAMHS ITS offers an innovative solution to the therapeutic management of young people who suffer from severe mental health problems by focusing on individual strengths and needs, building on strong partnerships and offering an effective alternative to inpatient care.

¹ See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Policy/2020-Vision> and <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/05/10102307/>

Key benefits of this innovation

For those using the service

The NHS Fife ITS provides a high quality service that results in positive outcomes for service users. Benefits include access to appropriate and effective therapeutic interventions, which result in overall improvements in young people's mental health.

Since the service was set up, scores on the well-established Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Children and Adolescent (HoNOSCA)² have shown a **marked improvement in 90.9% of cases**. This covers both indicators of mental wellbeing (e.g. hallucinations and delusions) and of social functioning (e.g. school attendance, family life and relationships).

From April 2011 to May 2012, thirty-eight 11-17 year olds with severe and complex mental health conditions were referred to the ITS. In total, forty-four young people were discharged by the service. Previously all of these children and young people would have required some level of inpatient care, but with the ITS in place **only 2 of those discharged had required hospital admission over this time**. Of those seen by the ITS service and requiring in-patient care, **their average 21 day stay was significantly below the 56 day average length of stay during the three years before the service was set up**. This, coupled with the fact that there has been a parallel fall in inappropriate admissions to adult inpatient mental health facilities and private health care centres since 2009, suggests strongly that children and young people have been able to access more effective, age appropriate and local services as a result of the ITS.

The holistic and responsive approach adopted by ITS engages other organisations with significant influence over a young person's development, drawing on the resources of individuals, families and communities. This manages mental ill health within a young person's own environmental and social setting, and so helps to build long-term resilience, improve ongoing support, reduce stigma and prevent isolation.

To the healthcare system

In addition to the all the quality improvements for those using the service noted above, the ITS can also demonstrate considerable economic benefits.

Over the course of 3 years, from 2009/10 to 2011/12 there has been a year-on-year reduction in inpatient costs as a result of the ITS. Costs in 2011/12 were £253,191, compared to £327,747 in 2009/10 – a saving of £74,556 over this period.

Prior to the establishment of ITS in 2002, the majority of service users would have been served by the NHS Fife CAMHS Inpatient Unit. As the latter operated at a higher cost base in comparison with the ITS (£959,616 per year compared to £542,321 per year, adjusted for inflation), there has been an annual operational cost saving of £417,295 for NHS Fife. This annual saving would be higher (up to £628,975) if we include savings generated because of reduced NHS Fife purchasing of CAMHS beds in NHS Lothian.

² See <http://www.liv.ac.uk/honosca/>

At the extreme case, if no new service had been set up when the Fife CAMHS inpatient unit closed in 2002, all young people needing care would have been referred to inpatient services outside of Fife. **Therefore, NHS Fife has avoided costs of £1,227,072 per year for such out of area referrals as a result of the existence of the CAMHS ITS service.**

To the wider health and social care system

Over and above the monetisable benefits to the NHS, the collaborative approach of the ITS means that a wide range of professionals working with children and young people who have emotional and mental health needs have shared their skills and expertise with colleagues to improve care. ITS also delivers expert training for other staff working with these children and families. Routes through care services are better coordinated to enhance the experience of each young person and their family and carers. And the resources of local partners and the community are brought together to better support the care, treatment and recovery of children and young people with severe mental health conditions.

Key costs of this innovation:

There were no initial set up costs for the ITS in 2002, as these were met through the closure of the original inpatient unit and the transfer of assets.

Figures from 2011/12 demonstrate that the running costs incurred by ITS relate to staff (£256,830), travel (£32,300) and inpatient care purchased from other providers (£253,191). The ITS therefore incurs an **annual operating cost of £542,321**.

Background to this economic assessment:

During 2012/13 The Office for Public Management and the Royal College of Nursing delivered a collaborative learning programme designed to empower nurses to understand, generate and use economic evidence to continuously transform care. The programme, funded by the Burdett Trust for Nursing, will engage up to 60 nurses across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The author of this report, Lee Cowie RMN, BSc, MSc, is a nurse consultant in CAMHS Acute Services for NHS Fife. He qualified in January 1996 and has worked in CAMHS services since 1997. He has led the NHS Fife ITS since 2006 and was appointed a nurse consultant in 2010. He previously worked as a clinical nurse specialist and senior charge nurse.

Directors of Nursing are making an important contribution, by supporting nurses' participation and managing organisational agreements to share the learning. The programme partners would like to thank NHS Fife for their support of Lee Cowie.

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*This case study was completed by **Lee Cowie, RMN, BSc, MSc**, nurse consultant in CAMHS Acute Services for NHS Fife in June 2013.*

Lee successfully completed a collaborative learning programme designed to empower nurses to understand, generate and use economic evidence to continuously transform care. The programme was delivered by the Royal College of Nursing and the Office for Public Management, funded by the Burdett Trust for Nursing and endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management.

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NHS Fife CAMHS Intensive Therapy Service (ITS)

Inputs

Investment

- Set up costs: None, as assets transferred from NHS Fife CAMHS In Patient Unit (IPU) following closure
- Operational costs: £542,321 per year (broken down below)

Staffing

- 1 x WTE Band 8A Nurse Consultant
- 0.5 x WTE Band 8A clinical Psychologist
- 3.6 x WTE Band 6 Senior Nurse Therapist
- 0.8 x WTE Band 6 Occupational Therapist
- 0.6 x WTE Band 3 Therapy Support Worker
- 0.2 x WTE Band 8A Family Therapist
- 0.8 x WTE Cons. Psychiatrist (costs met by wider CAMHS)

Total staff costs: £256,830

Other resources

- Travel expenditure: £32,300
- NHS CAMHS IPU costs £209,106
- Private provider IPU costs £44,085

The service

Journey through service

- Referrals made through NHS Fife CAMHS referral pathway and emergency referrals via CAMHS Consultant psychiatrists/ Senior clinicians
- 38 children and young people (CYP) referred in 2011/12 with severe and complex mental health needs
- 44 CYP discharged from ITS in 2011/12. Most CYP likely to have required some inpatient care, pre-ITS being in place.

Services

Therapeutic

- Intensive mental health assessments
- Individualised care packages
- Risk assessment & management
- Increased engagement in CAMHS
- Increased access to social support
- Access to psychological therapies

Clinical

- Access to inpatient care
- Collaborative care planning with partners
- Medication prescribing
- Medication monitoring
- Psycho-education

Training/Consultation

- Through Playfield Institute (a resource to improve CYP's emotional well-being, for carers and any staff working with CYP and their families.)
- To education services
- To tier II & III CAMHS staff
- To primary care providers

Summary of benefits

Children and young people, carers

- Improvements in mental health and social functioning outcomes for 90.9% of young people (using standardised measures: HoNOSCA)
- Access to appropriate & effective therapeutic interventions
- 95.5% of young people discharged from ITS had avoided hospital admission
- Reduced number of admissions to CAMHS IPUs
- Shorter admissions to IPUs when necessary (Average length of stay since ITS: 21 days. Pre-ITS: 56 days)
- Reduced number of CYP admissions to adult IPUs, avoiding potentially inappropriate placements
- Reduced stigma of having mental health needs and contact with services
- Focus upon young person's and family's strengths

For healthcare system

- 3 yr consecutive reduction in costs of inpatient care, demonstrating efficiency of £74,556 since 2009/10
- Positive cost comparison between NHS Fife CAMHS IPU & ITS, resulting in a saving of £417,295 per year
- ITS helps avoid costs of up to £1,227,072, compared with using external inpatient providers to fully meet current clinical need (Note: the successful operation of wider Fife CAMHS is key to sustaining positive outcomes for CYP and ITS impact.)

For other local services

- Collaborative working with partners
- Increased skills to work with CYPs emotional and mental health needs
- Community resources actively engaged in care, treatment and recovery process