Psychiatric Assessment Rooms

Author
Adrian Boyle

Introduction

This section describes the built environment that an emergency department should have to look after patients who present in mental health crisis.

Standards

Facilities must meet the following requirements

1. Be located within the main Emergency Department.

2. Have at least two doors which open outwards and are not lockable from the inside.

3. Have an observation panel or window which allows staff from outside the room to check on the patient or staff member, but which still provides a sufficient degree of privacy.

4. Have a panic button or alarm system (unless staff carry alarms at all times).

5. Only include furniture, fittings and equipment which are unlikely to be used to cause harm or injury to the patient or staff member. For example, sinks, sharp edged furniture, lightweight chairs, tables, cables, televisions or anything else that could be used to cause harm or as a missile are not permitted.

6. Have a ceiling which has been risk assessed.

7. Not have any ligature points.

8. Sharp corners, such as at the corners of protruding walls are covered to reduce the risk of harm. If there is a bed within the room, this should be weighted with no ligature risks.

9. There must be a process in place to ensure the patient is monitored whilst in the room.

Recommendations

1. Be appropriately decorated to provide a sense of calmness.

2. There should be a process in place to ensure patients are supported to access ligature free toilet facilities or at minimum toilets with thumb turn locks.

Background

Patients who present to Emergency Departments with a mental health crisis need a different environment to be safely assessed in. They are asked sensitive information, may be frightened or agitated and may be a risk to themselves or others. Our standards and recommendations are entirely based on the Royal College of Psychiatrist's Psychiatric Liaison Network's (PLAN) standards.