

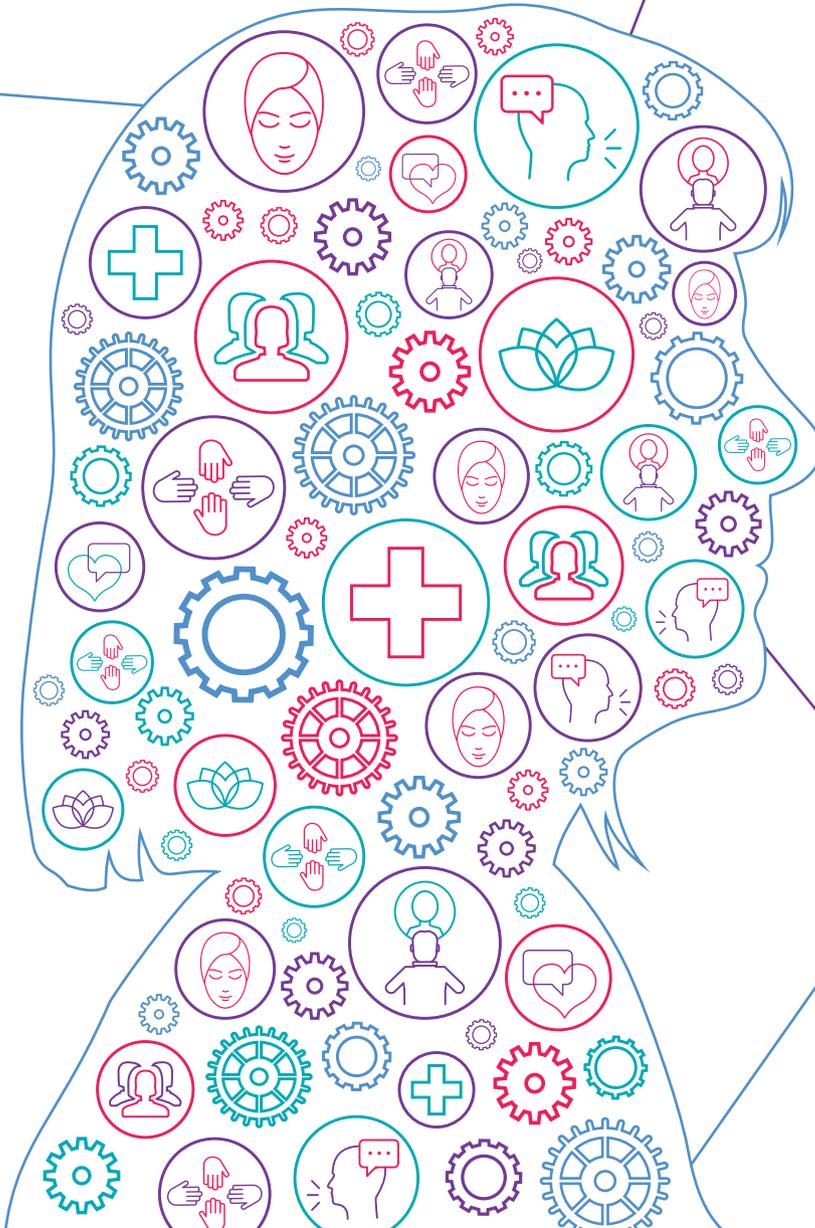


## Women's Mental Health Services

Northampton, Essex, Birmingham



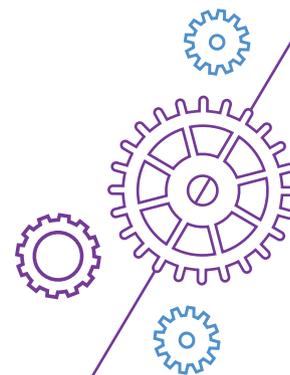
**St Andrew's**  
HEALTHCARE



# Understanding mental illness in women

*Transforming lives together*

# The complexities of mental illness in women



There are well documented psychological differences between men and women, resulting in clear differences in the presentation of mental health disorders between the genders.

## Social factors

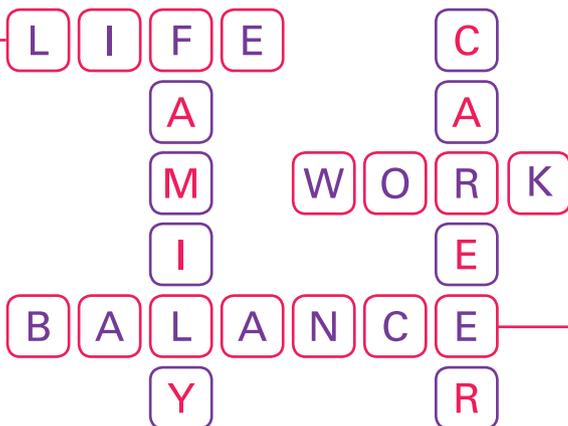
In addition to these psychological differences, women are both assigned and take on distinct social roles, resulting in them facing different social challenges to men.

These social factors can significantly impact a woman's mental wellbeing:

- increased stress as a result of assuming multiple roles such as parent, partner, paid worker, unpaid worker
- higher prevalence of depression, anxiety and social distress amongst women
- higher prevalence of sexual violence/abuse and domestic violence
- gender discrimination, including being overrepresented in low income jobs and underpaid compared to men
- higher likelihood of living in poverty and suffering hunger and malnutrition.

There is a positive relationship between the frequency and severity of these social differences and the frequency and severity of mental health problems in women.

This results in women presenting with greater complexities and heightened vulnerability compared to men, and the likelihood of being diagnosed with three or more mental health conditions.\*



# How specialist services for women support recovery

A compounding issue to the gender differences is that women represent a small minority within a mental health system primarily designed for men. The result can be that their specific gender needs are often poorly acknowledged and met.

Treatment for women suffering with mental illness needs to be sensitive to their needs. Failure to acknowledge this and make the relevant adaptations to their care can intensify a woman's feelings of powerlessness and victimisation, often increasing vulnerability and the likelihood of their mental illness symptoms worsening.

## National service for women at St Andrew's

The women's mental illness service at St Andrew's provides 129 specialist beds for women of all ages with severe and enduring mental health disorders and complex needs. These specialist services are provided across medium, low, and locked environments in three locations nationally, enabling women to be closer to their home area where possible.

### Supporting women with:

- severe and enduring mental health disorders
- complex needs
- psychosis
- schizophrenia
- co-morbid Personality Disorders
- co-morbid mild Learning Disabilities
- challenging behaviours.



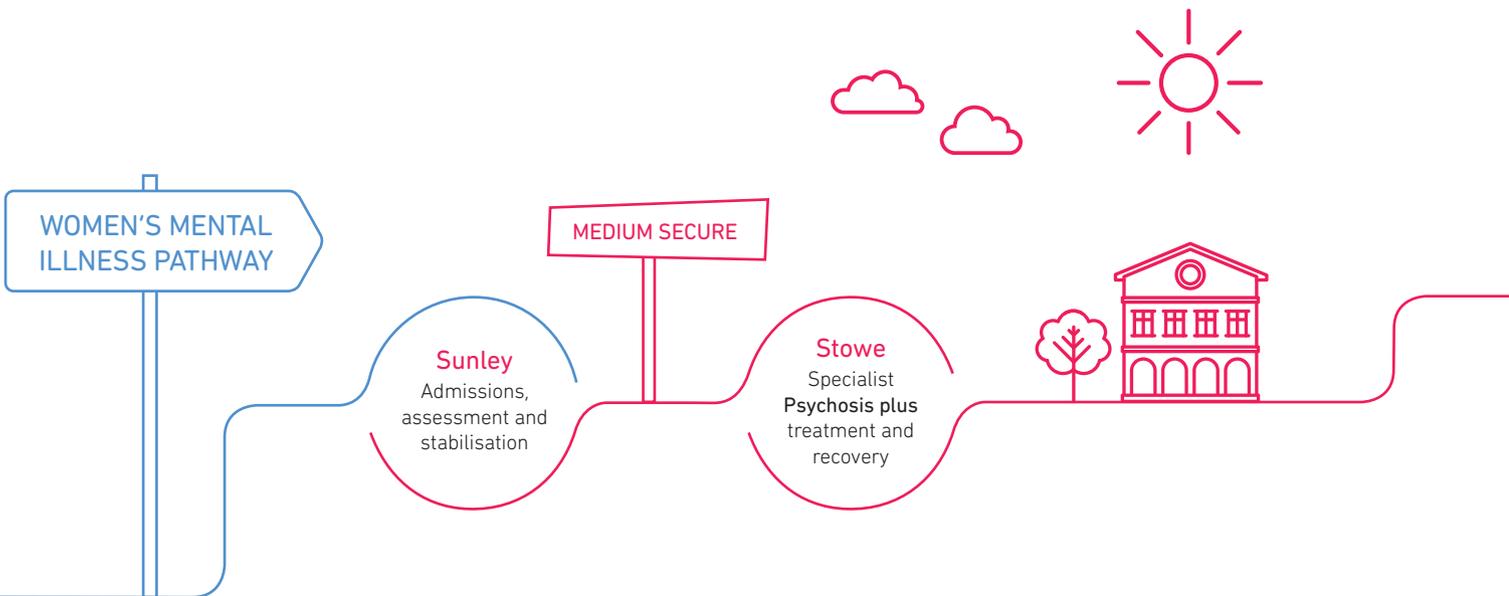
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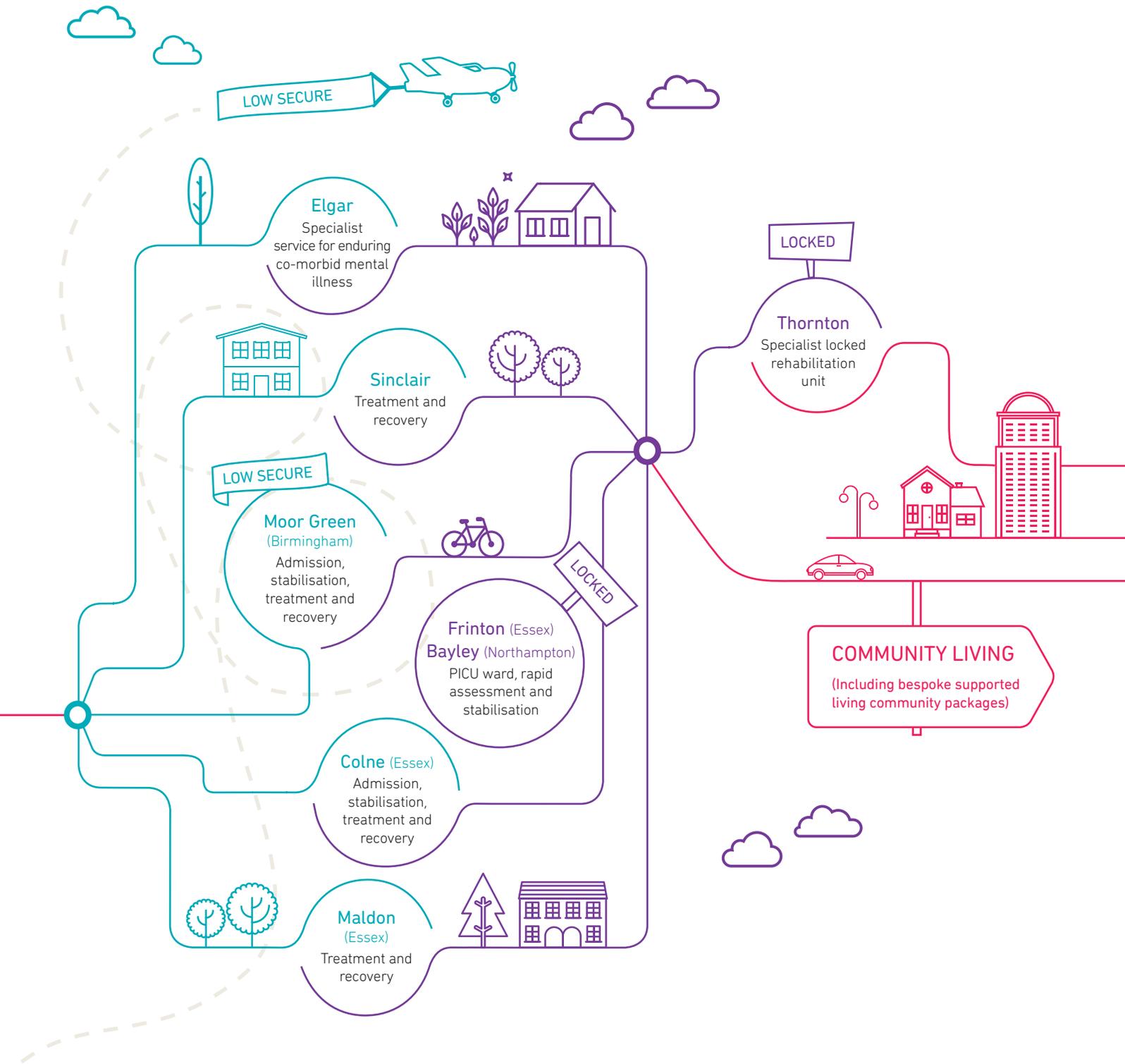
The number of women supported within St Andrew's women's service over the last 24 months.

# Women's mental illness service at St Andrew's

## Specialist services focus on:

- a much greater emphasis on relational security, providing a basis for safe and effective therapeutic relationships to aid recovery
- placing women in least restrictive environments - not excessive to their specific levels of risk, enabling skills to be progressively developed and tested
- ward environments designed around the specific interests and preferences women have, aesthetically supporting recovery
- a high ratio of female staff and the inclusion of positive male role models across the specialist pathways delivering care for women
- a personalised approach to working with women, safeguarding against vulnerabilities
- models of therapy both specifically developed and adapted for women, helping to achieve the best outcomes
- placing women in environments which are all female and age appropriate, offering the opportunity for their physiological and social needs to be met through the hugely important peer interaction and support.





LOW SECURE

### Elgar

Specialist service for enduring co-morbid mental illness

### Sinclair

Treatment and recovery

LOW SECURE

### Moor Green (Birmingham)

Admission, stabilisation, treatment and recovery

### Frinton (Essex)

Bayley (Northampton)  
PICU ward, rapid assessment and stabilisation

LOCKED

### Colne (Essex)

Admission, stabilisation, treatment and recovery

### Maldon (Essex)

Treatment and recovery

LOCKED

### Thornton

Specialist locked rehabilitation unit

### COMMUNITY LIVING

(Including bespoke supported living community packages)

# Holistic care for women

Recognising that a single approach to mental illness doesn't produce the best outcomes, St Andrew's has developed a number of specialist services for women.



## **Women's older age service - Elgar**

Older women are especially vulnerable in general mental health services. They tend to have more physical health needs which can make them particularly exposed. Elgar, a Quality Network for Forensic Mental Health Services (QNF MHS) accredited older women's service, understands and addresses these vulnerabilities, whilst managing the risks and appropriately supporting older women.

## **Women's Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) - Frinton and Bayley**

Based in Essex and Northampton, our PICU service for women offers rapid, gender sensitive psychiatric intensive care, in a supportive and safe environment. Attention is given to rapidly assess and stabilise women. They are allocated a personal care co-ordinator within 24 hours of admission who, with input from the patient and the MDT, develops an individual care plan, setting personal goals to begin their recovery/discharge process.

## **Women's psychosis plus service - Stowe**

Women with psychosis often have complex needs presenting with multiple co-morbid conditions, offending backgrounds and challenging behaviours. Through a combination of adapted therapeutic and pharmacological approaches, Stowe ward is able to care for women who have psychosis and who may have failed in other placements, providing them with the tools required to better manage their condition.

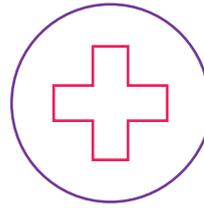
## **High dependency rehabilitation unit - Thornton**

Although more complex, women are often more willing to engage in treatment than men and therefore achieve better recovery outcomes in rehabilitation services.

Evidence shows that around two thirds of patients, who receive treatment within specialist rehabilitation services, rather than generic mental health services, progress to successful community living.\*

Thornton ward provides specialist rehabilitation services for women with mental health disorders, providing a step to positively test risk and provide the skills required to discharge to successful community living.





### Messages of encouragement

*'Don't take things personally. We are mental health patients at the end of the day. It's not all peaches and cream, but it will be rewarding for you when you see a patient progress by achieving a small goal in rebuilding their lives and then finally getting discharged.'*

### Some of the best things nurses have done for me

- Being persistent with me – even on the tough days
- Taking the time to get to know me properly
- Getting to know my family, which is so important to me
- Building a rapport of trust with me
- Feeling that they care – this has been the biggest part – feeling it without someone saying
- Even if a nurse just sits there and listens for a few minutes, this may be all we need. I think that this is the most helpful aspect of a nurse's role



## Why Nurses are important to me

*"I have been at St Andrew's nearly two years and have moved through the service from admission to medium secure, and now to low secure."*

*"At St Andrew's I have gained more insight into the role of nurses and the positive impact they have on my care. For example, nurses make a positive impact at your Tribunals, CPAs, Managers hearings etc. The nurses spoke honestly and positively about me and because I was new to these settings, they took time to explain everything. Things like my section, pathway, and my care. They also explained things to my Mother who didn't know anything about hospitals."*

**Qualities nurses need** - "I think that the qualities nurses need include trust, having an open mind and displaying care and compassion. I do not feel nurses need experience; this can be learnt and built over time. Nurses must be interested. This is not just a job. You have got to work here because you care and want to make a difference. Even if you help just one person, that person may then go forward and help someone else.

Persistence is crucial. You need to keep coming back. One day a patient won't want to talk but one day that same patient will accept help from you and that's when you've got to be there ready."

# Interventions for women

Recovery within the women's service is supported by therapies and treatments which have been tailored to be gender specific and gender sensitive. Each therapy timetable is bespoke to each woman's needs, established through the comprehensive assessment process.

## Therapies include:

**Psychosocial Manualised Treatment Programme** – developed by St Andrew's in response to the complex treatment needs of women. The programme is based on the assessment of core needs and is gender sensitive and gender specific. There are 15 treatment manuals within the programme including:

- dealing with feelings
- social problem solving
- interpersonal effectiveness
- understanding and overcoming substance misuse
- living with mental illness
- improving body image.

Outside of the group work, women are encouraged to engage in 'homework' to ensure the benefits of the treatment extends beyond the sessions into everyday life.

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Psychosis (CBTp)** - an adaptation of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy which aims to reduce distress associated with the symptoms of psychosis and improve functioning. CBTp typically progresses through the following phrases:

- **Engagement and befriending** - building a therapeutic relationship and identifying goals
- **Assessment of experiences** - collaborative exploration of symptoms and experiences
- **Formulation development** - understanding the link between an interpretation of an event and subsequent behavioural and affective responses
- **Skill building** – cognitive and behavioural skill learning for specific psychotic symptoms, such as managing voices and exploring distressing beliefs
- **Skill testing** – allows skills to be tested and adapted in real world scenarios to ensure the benefits of the therapy is applied beyond the sessions into everyday life.

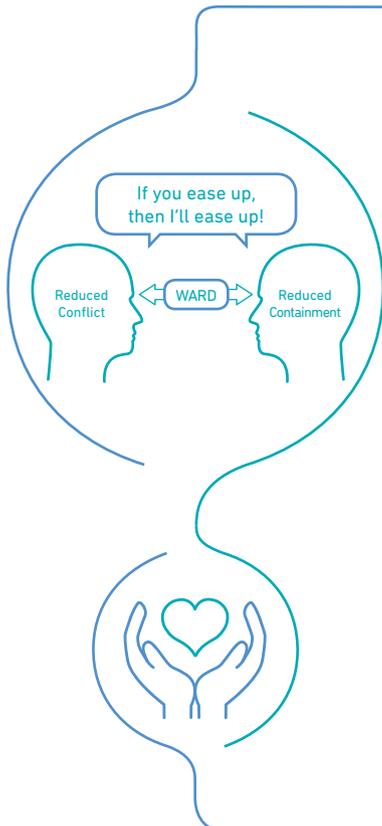
## Other interventions

- **Elements of Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT)** – helping women to regulate and change emotions
- **RAID**® – applying principles of Reinforce Appropriate, Implode Disruptive creates an atmosphere of hope and understanding for women
- **Positive risk taking** - helps to empower women as they learn from new experiences
- **BFT** – Behavioural Family Therapy
- Mindfulness
- Substance misuse
- Anger management
- Occupational Therapy interventions.

# Safewards at St Andrew's



Based on research from around the world, Safewards is an initiative which focuses on reducing conflict and containment within psychiatric environments. From an initial 300 interventions, 10 were chosen based on their effectiveness in blind randomised trials. The results were a **15% reduction in conflict and 24% reduction in containment.**



Recognising these benefits, St Andrew's uses the principles of Safewards across the women's mental illness service.

#### Examples of the Safewards Interventions include:

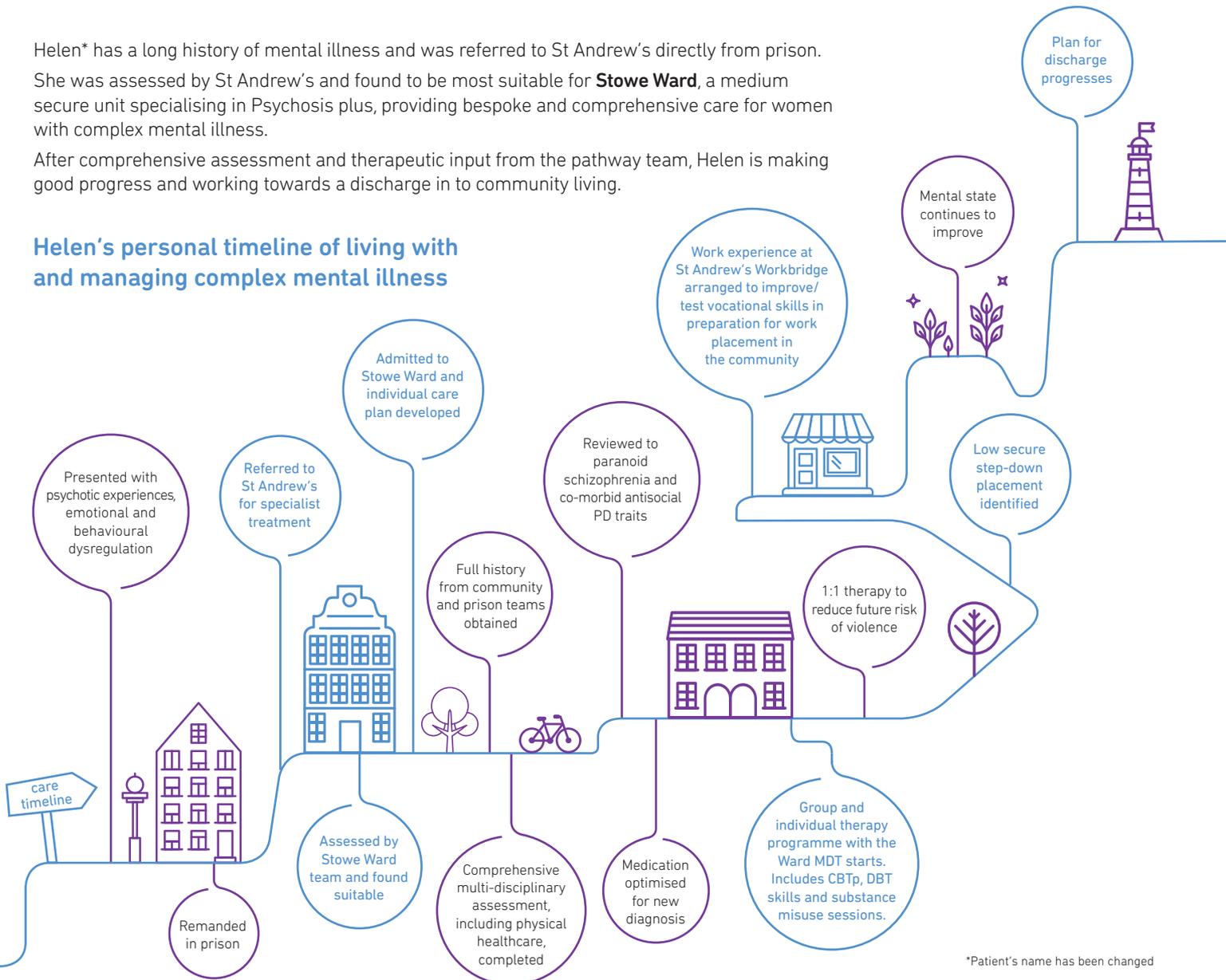
- **Messages of hope** - on the day of their discharge, each patient has the opportunity to write a message of hope and positivity for new patients coming on to the ward.
- **Knowing each other** - a "getting to know each other" folder is held on each ward where members of staff and patients can provide information about themselves that they are happy to share. Sharing information, such as hobbies/interests and favourite TV programmes, in this way helps to develop good therapeutic relationships.
- **Positive words** - staff and patients focus on using positive words, such as mentioning something positive about each patient at handover.
- **Soft words** - posters are located in each of the wards where staff can add suggestions for respectful and polite ways of interacting in the different situations they face day-to-day with the patients they care for.

# Living with mental illness

Helen\* has a long history of mental illness and was referred to St Andrew's directly from prison. She was assessed by St Andrew's and found to be most suitable for **Stowe Ward**, a medium secure unit specialising in Psychosis plus, providing bespoke and comprehensive care for women with complex mental illness.

After comprehensive assessment and therapeutic input from the pathway team, Helen is making good progress and working towards a discharge in to community living.

## Helen's personal timeline of living with and managing complex mental illness



\*Patient's name has been changed

# Workbridge - developing skills and supporting transitions



Women access a broad range of activities at Workbridge as part of the vocational skills service at St Andrew's.

Workbridge is a coffee shop and garden centre, open to the public, where patients can access therapy sessions in areas such as woodwork, horticulture, catering, office skills and ceramics, helping them to develop work and social skills, independence and self-confidence, ahead of their transition.

Every week over 250 patients from St Andrew's and the local community access Workbridge.



## Contact/referral info

For more information about our [women's mental illness service](#) or for referrals:

**t:** 0800 434 6690 (text relay calls welcome)

**e:** [enquiries@standrew.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@standrew.co.uk)

**w:** [stah.org/women](http://stah.org/women)

Registered Charity Number 1104951

4\_0718 Individuals pictured are models and are used for illustrative purposes only.

