



ASD 'Service Spotlight' Profile recordings



Rachel Smyth – Learning Disability Registered Nurse and the Registered Manager at Winslow

Your experience in mental health: I have worked for St Andrew's for two and a half years within the ASD division. Prior to that, the majority of my background was hospital. So high, medium and low secure hospitals for adults with learning disabilities. I applied for the role at Winslow due to how unique it is being a community service.

What sets Winslow apart from a traditional inpatient service: Winslow is very different as it manages to look after very complex service users in a community setting. Service users here have the same risks and complexities as those in traditional inpatient hospitals but we manage risks and their complexities in very different and individualised ways based on their individual needs and risks on a particular day. We don't have a seclusion room and we don't have an internal MDT (Multi-disciplinary team). Service users here are not detained under the mental health act (*instead using DOLs and MOJ restrictions*). We are a community and through strong relationships, we use positive behavioural support to manage risk. An example being a lady who was cared for by 3:1 nursing due to her risk in certain areas, however we still managed to support her on a day out at Alton Towers.

Challenges in your role: The main challenges of Winslow and my role relates to how bespoke and independent the care we deliver is. All service users have their own apartment with their own team based on their individual needs. But, these can change rapidly on a daily basis and so the staff team need to be really flexible and adaptable to adjust. It's not like a inpatient hospital setting where a clinical team support all the patients on the ward. There is less of a nursing framework or structure here. We need to be a lot more adaptable.

What you most enjoy about your role: I love caring for others. I have always worked in Health and Social Care since leaving school. Never worked in any other area. I did my nursing and qualified 11 years ago. I think it is just supporting individuals to have the best quality of life and now being a manager of this service I can embed that into this service and make sure that happens. If I can get better outcomes for service users then that makes my day.

Interesting/fun fact about yourself: I love Zombies. Anything to do with Zombies, films, books. That's what I do to wind down. It takes me away. It's about the survival that I find really interesting.



What is Winslow and how is it different from a hospital setting: Winslow is a residential with nursing community setting for adults with a primary diagnosis of learning disability. However, service users will often have ASD and sometimes a dual diagnosis of mental health.

Describe a typical patient presentation at Winslow: We have patients here with various needs. All current patients have spent time in hospital under the mental health act and have moved to Winslow to help them move into the community and become more included in society but in a much less restrictive environment. We have challenges very similar to a hospital setting. We have high levels of violence and aggression from some service users. We have service users who struggle with self-harm as many hospitals do.

What are the main interventions used: We very much put the service user first. They are involved in every aspect of their care. We work with them from day one to understand them and achieve the outcomes that they need to help them move on. Winslow manage very complex individuals but we do not have a seclusion room here to support challenging behaviour. Instead, we build strong therapeutic relationships and use positive behavioural support to de-escalate risky situations. All service users have a front door, they all have their self-contained apartments, so the care we need to deliver is very individualised to support their needs and will often change on a daily basis.

What activities are available to service users at Winslow: Whatever service users want to do, they can do at Winslow. We have service users who enjoy fishing so we help them to get the necessary fishing licences. We have supported service users to go swimming, to day centres, to the seaside, the zoo, Alton Towers. They tell us what they want to do and within reason, we try to help them to do the things they wish to do as a person living independently in the community, making their own choices.

How does Winslow support service users into the community: To help our service users take that next step into the community we use robust care planning. We do everything we can to ensure that they feel included in the local community and their society. It is important not to push service users too far and ensure that they take the next step when they are ready. We sometimes have service users who have high levels of nursing support and it's important that we recognise that reducing nursing staff support may be as good as it gets for certain service users and that is okay.

How does Winslow support the Transforming care agenda: Winslow is very much a community service in line with the national strategy to deliver care closer to home. All service users are from Nottinghamshire. We work to engage our service users in the local community. Service users are closer to their home area and their families. Families are very much engaged in the care of their loved ones at Winslow, which helps the recovery process for some.