

PE1471/H

Scottish Parliament Public Petition on Young People's Hospital Wards

Response from NHS Highland April 2013

What are your views on what the petition seeks and the discussions that took place when the petition was considered at the meeting on 1 March 2013?

In Raigmore and the HHSCP we do not transition young people to adult services before the age of 16. The topic of the petition is young people between age 16 and 21. We think that specific inpatient provision for this group is an excellent idea. It would also extend our options for the in-patient care of any 14+ child who is physiologically and emotionally more mature than can be properly catered for in a Children's Ward environment.

We would agree that moving to adult services under the age of 18 years can be difficult for young people. Perhaps transition to adult services should be person specific and not age related, considering maturity, although this may be difficult to implement. Having a separate ward for young people of a certain age is difficult for smaller hospitals as it reduces bed flexibility, so flexibility in space usage is required. Nevertheless, young people are a unique group and they should have wards (adjacent to children's wards) designed to meet their developmental needs. One solution is to have separate leisure facilities eg playroom for 14-18 year olds.

What specialised training is given to staff treating or working with adolescents and young people in the NHS in Scotland?

There is much greater awareness in staff now of the different challenges this group of young adults brings. More staff are trained in skills such as motivational interviewing but it is not mandatory.

The workforce needs to be equipped with the skills and competence to look after young people across the board.

Current mental health services available to young people need to be redesigned.