

Puawai: Midland Regional Forensic Psychiatric Service

Puawai provides regional forensic psychiatric services to the Midland region, covering the courts, prisons, and general mental health services within that area. Essentially forensic psychiatry is about legal (offending) issues pertaining to people who have or are thought to have a mental disorder.

The services provided by Puawai include a secure inpatient service of 44 beds based in Hamilton (in the Henry Rongomau Bennett Centre) and a community forensic service that includes services to the prisons and courts in the region, as well as community mental health follow up to community based forensic service users living in Hamilton.

Although assessment of mental disorder particularly in relation to a person's offending is one of the primary services for the Midland Regional Forensic Psychiatric Service, treatment and rehabilitation are also equally significant components, i.e. a person may have offended and this is found to have been as a result of their mental illness, or mental illness coupled with problem behaviours that may result in serious offending.

It is then the goal of our services to successfully treat the person's illness and eventually safely rehabilitate the individual back into their home community. This is often the time when the local adult mental health services and/or general practitioners may become involved in the ongoing care of people (often whom they know well) that are transitioning out of forensic services back into the community with their primary health services to continue the support.

Stigma is a real issue for people with mental health problems. It is therefore important that people who have entered mental health services, and especially forensic psychiatric services, for whatever reason, are given as much opportunity in their future to live as normal a life as possible. The challenges for all health care providers is to practice safely and responsibly and aim to achieve the best possible health outcomes for individuals and families/whanau who are part of our respective services.

Entry criteria

Referrals to the service are from three main areas:

- justice system (courts) – For people alleged to have offended and who are thought to have a mental illness and the court require a psychiatric report to assist them in determining sentencing issues, etc.
- corrections services (prison, community probation) – for individuals in prison, either on remand or sentenced, requiring assessment and/or treatment. Also for individuals leaving the prison and transitioning back to their home area and require support linkages to be in place
- general mental health services) - for people that have a mental illness and are demonstrating consistent dangerous behaviour and require a secure facility for their ongoing safe management and care. Also where appropriate, a co-working

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relationship between the community general mental health and forensic services is available for individuals with mental illness considered being of high risk in the community.

Location and geographical boundaries

Midland region; including Waikato, King Country, Bay of Plenty, Whakatane, Rotorua, and Taranaki areas. The forensic service is based in Hamilton but operates an outreach service to the other areas, e.g. community mental health nurses provide court liaison services to courts in the Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHB areas. In addition there is one community mental health nurse based in New Plymouth covering the Taranaki area. Regular clinics also occur with the local general mental health, court and corrections services and are held in these regions. These include the forensic psychiatrists from Hamilton assigned to that area. General practitioner referrals in regard to forensic matters in the above areas should be directed to the nearest Adult Mental Health Service for initial screening and assessment, then as necessary can be referred onto the forensic service. For out of hours/weekends emergency situations phone the CAT service on 0800 50 50 50. If however a general practitioner is asked by their local court to consider mental illness issues in relation to a psychiatric court report for an alleged offender, then we advise that they contact the forensic service for advice and consultation before recommending (in particular) a

forensic inpatient referral. **Contacts**

All enquiries should be directed to Community Forensic Service – (07) 859 9146 (Office hours) or Fax: (07) 834 0267

- Inpatient forensic service, Henry Rongomau Bennett Centre, (24 hrs) – nurse in charge, (07) 839 8899 ext. 96533
- Emergency out of hours/weekends, Crisis, Assessment & Treatment Service (CAT) 0800 50 50 50

Operations Manager: Kylie Balzer

Address

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