

**7 April 2016**

### **Swindon is a beacon of good practice**

This week marks an important milestone for NHS Mental Health Care in Swindon. Seriously mentally ill patients in Swindon have not been placed in out of area acute care beds for the past year, achieving a national target 18 months ahead of time.

The Independent Commission on adult acute mental healthcare published its report, known as the 'The Crisp Report', in February 2016. The Report identified a target to phase out the practice of sending acutely mentally unwell people far away for treatment by October 2017, but by working collaboratively to redesign mental health services, Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) have today confirmed that they have not needed to admit a patient out of area for their care.

For patients in Swindon this means they are more likely to be admitted to a bed in Swindon, rather than being transferred to either an acute bed elsewhere in the region, or a private bed possibly even further away. Previously, beds have been used all around the country, often resulting in lengthy waits, long journeys, delays to commencing treatment and difficulties for families to visit. These factors have the potential to impact upon the patient with an acute mental illness, possibly making them feel even more unwell and unsafe.

The situation was very different three years ago where there were 18 patients placed in out of area acute beds as the wards in Swindon and within the AWP area across the South West were full.

**Simon Manchip, Clinical Director for Swindon at AWP said:** "We recognised a long time ago the need for improvement within our mental health provision and since 2014 there has been much collaborative working between all stakeholders to re-design mental health services in Swindon.

"This has really been down to the superb effort of the staff at Applewood, bed management and the intensive team. There has been much hard work, not only to turn around the situation, but also to sustain the position, and we want to take the opportunity to celebrate this achievement, which has allowed Swindon to become a beacon of good practice."

**Thomas Kearney, Associate Director for Urgent Care said:** "Through close partnership working, Swindon CCG and AWP have radically improved the experience of mental health services for most vulnerable patients. We know that not having to travel long distances to get the right care makes a real difference to the families and carers for our patients.

"Learning from this success, we will continue to work with AWP to improve mental health services in Swindon and Shrivenham over the coming years."