Your guide to
Rowanbank Clinic
Modernising Mental Health Services

The development of Rowanbank Clinic is part of a much wider plan to improve and modernise mental health facilities and services across Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

This innovative plan will see many of our older inpatient wards, including those at Gartnavel Royal Hospital, replaced with modern purpose-built facilities. These new facilities will have single en-suite bedrooms, smaller wards and improved recreational and therapeutic facilities.

A range of specialist inpatient mental health facilities have also been developed to meet the needs of a wide range of service users. These include the Mother and Baby Mental Health Unit on the Southern General Site, Eriskay House on the Stobhill site, which provides dedicated support and treatment for people with drug and alcohol problems and Skye House, a new purpose-built facility for young people currently under construction on the Stobhill site.

Work to develop and improve many community-based facilities such as mental health day hospitals, resource centres and outpatient clinics are also being taken forward.

Although high quality mental health accommodation and facilities are important, being able to access a comprehensive range of services and support is also vital. For this reason we are developing and improving a wide range of new mental health services. These include new crisis services to provide additional intensive support for people with a serious mental illness during evenings and weekends and primary care mental health services to improve the care and treatment of people with mild to moderate mental illness including stress, anxiety and mild depression. New services are also being developed for young people who are experiencing mental illness for the first time and for adults with eating disorders.
A network of medium secure care centres are already in place across England and Wales. Rowanbank Clinic is the second centre to be built in Scotland. It follows the opening in November 2000 of the 50 bed Orchard Clinic in the grounds of Royal Edinburgh Hospital which serves the East of Scotland. A further facility is planned at Murray Royal Hospital in Perth to serve the north of the country. Plans to develop a separate West of Scotland facility at Dykebar Hospital have been postponed pending the outcome of a review of mental health services across Clyde. In the meantime, it has been agreed with the Scottish Executive that Rowanbank Clinic will provide medium secure care services for the West of Scotland on an interim basis. This will ensure NHS Boards are able to comply with the new Mental Health Act. By retaining low secure mental health beds at Leverndale, we have been able to accommodate this interim arrangement without changing the size, external design or increasing the overall number of beds at Rowanbank Clinic. Patients from the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area will still account for the majority of patients treated at Rowanbank Clinic.

Background and introduction

In January 1999, the Scottish Executive announced plans to develop and improve services for people with mental illness. These included proposals to develop a network of new medium secure care centres across Scotland to bridge the gap that currently exists between high security inpatient facilities, such as those provided by the State Hospital at Carstairs, and low security inpatient facilities such as those at Leverndale and Dykebar Hospitals. The new Mental Health Act also places a requirement on NHS Boards to ensure that patients with a mental illness are able to be treated in facilities which meet their needs and are not subject to higher levels of security than they require. A medium secure care centre is a specialist type of mental health hospital. It provides care for the small number of patients with mental illnesses who require to be treated in a more secure environment than a general or low security mental health hospital can provide but who do not require high security care.
Improving patient care and treatment

The new Rowanbank Clinic will significantly improve the range of mental health services available. It will provide specialist treatment and support in modern, purpose-built accommodation designed to meet the specific needs of patients and staff.

Rowanbank Clinic will provide specialist care and treatment to help patients recover from their mental illness. Staff will work with patients to ensure they are equipped with the practical skills they will need to cope when they eventually return to live in the community. Patients being treated at Rowanbank Clinic will undergo a gradual process of rehabilitation, normally carried out over several years and will spend the vast majority of this time inside the Clinic. If they do require to leave the Clinic for any reason they will normally be accompanied by a trained member of staff. When patients have made significant progress in their recovery and are well enough to spend time outside hospital they will be transferred to a low secure mental health facility in their local health board area where they will continue to receive treatment until they are well enough to return to live in the community.

Type of patients treated

Rowanbank Clinic is not a prison and while some patients will have committed an offence, a number of patients will be admitted directly from the community. Others will be admitted directly from court or transferred from prison for mental health assessment or treatment before the criminal justice process can continue. Currently these patients are managed in a prison setting which is inappropriate.

Most patients will have a history of serious mental illness (schizophrenia or manic depressive illness) and will have been assessed as a risk or potential risk to others. This risk, however, will be significantly reduced when their illness is treated and they start to recover.

A number of patients may be transferred from the State Hospital, this will only happen when it is clear that their illness is stable. Normally patients will have spent several years undergoing treatment at the State Hospital before they are well enough to be transferred. In all circumstances a detailed assessment would be carried out before a decision is made to transfer a patient. This assessment would take into account the patient’s illness, their understanding of the illness and their potential risk to themselves or others.

Although Rowanbank Clinic will provide a West of Scotland service when it opens, the vast majority of patients will come from the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area.
Increasing public safety

Medium secure care centres will improve public safety as patients who have undergone treatment and rehabilitation are less likely to become ill again and so re-offend after they are discharged. Patients will also have access to follow up mental health care and support in the community. This will enable staff to monitor their progress and arrange for patients to be re-admitted to hospital if their mental health starts to deteriorate and they become unwell. In addition, the introduction of new medium secure care hospitals will increase the treatment options available and bridge the gap which currently exists between high secure and low secure mental health hospitals. It also provides a continuum of care where patients will be able to move through high, medium and low security care on a gradual basis as they recover. This is a far safer and more effective model of care than the current arrangements where patients are transferred directly from high security mental health hospitals to low security mental health hospitals or discharged straight back into the community.

Services and facilities

Unlike other mental health hospitals where the average length of stay is around six weeks, patients at Rowanbank Clinic will normally spend around three years undergoing treatment and rehabilitation before they are transferred to another hospital or discharged. It is therefore vital that patients have access to the specialist care and treatment they require to give them the best possible chances of recovery.

Patients will have access to a range of general health services along with specialist mental health services delivered by psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists, clinical forensic psychologists, social work and forensic psychiatrists which will include:

- treatment for mental illness (including access to drug, psychological and behavioural therapies and counselling)
- rehabilitation (including individual and group therapy, education, training, occupational therapy)
- health improvement (including opportunities for physical exercise)

Although providing drug and therapeutic treatment is obviously important, making sure patients are equipped with the practical skills and experience to help them cope after they are discharged is also vital. They also need to have access to a range of facilities and activities as part of their overall treatment programme. Rowanbank is, therefore, equipped with a number of recreational and therapeutic facilities including an IT learning centre, therapy kitchen and access to a number of arts and crafts and gardening projects. As patients will spend the vast majority of their time inside the building, they need to have access to exercise facilities. This will not only improve their overall physical health but will boost their mental health as regular exercise has been shown to reduce levels of stress, anxiety and symptoms of depression. Rowanbank Clinic therefore has a sports hall, gym and a five a side football pitch.
Layout & design

Rowanbank’s design and layout was developed over many months and incorporates many of the latest features and technology used in other parts of the country. The aim from the very beginning was to create a bright, modern and attractive environment which would aid the recovery of patients and provide a good working environment for our staff.

Although it does have additional security features these have been built into the design and fabric of the building to ensure they are not obvious or intrusive to the surrounding area. By doing this we have avoided the need for external perimeter walls or fences. This is particularly important as Rowanbank Clinic is an NHS hospital not a prison.

Features include a single point of entry into the main building, with CCTV cameras and airport style security checks for anyone entering and leaving the building. In addition, none of the areas used by patients have any external windows or doors and instead face onto an internal courtyard.

Before finalising the design, staff visited similar centres in other parts of the UK to look at best practice, identify what layout works well and explore the latest technology available. By learning from this experience and taking on board feedback from local staff and patients, we now have one of the most modern, innovative secure care centres in the country.

In many ways however, the layout and design of Rowanbank Clinic is similar to other modern mental health hospitals. For example, it is single storey, has small wards with individual bedrooms, separate therapy areas and consulting rooms.
Working with the local community

Before the first patients were admitted we organised a series of visits to give staff, partner agencies and mental health organisations the chance to see round the Clinic. Representatives from local resident groups, housing associations and schools were also invited to visit the Clinic and find out more about how it will be run. This is an important first step in building a relationship with the local community and challenging some of the common myths and misconceptions surrounding medium secure care services.

Where similar facilities which have been operating for some time, they have built up good relationships with local residents and community groups and, in many cases have become actively involved in local community initiatives and events.

We therefore want to explore ways in which Rowanbank may be able to make a positive contribution to the local community. This could be by providing local employment opportunities for local people, fundraising or volunteering for local events or contributing to local events and initiatives.

Impact on local economy and job opportunities

When the new Rowanbank Clinic is fully operational it will employ more than 300 staff. This will not only help boost the local economy through the increased business generated for local shops and facilities but will also increase job opportunities for local people. Rowanbank will employ mental health staff such as nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists and occupational therapists as well as a wide range of support staff including nursing assistants, porters, catering assistants, cleaners and safety staff. Many of these new frontline posts are expected to be filled by local people including those living in the Springburn, Balornock, Kirkintilloch and Bishopbriggs areas. The recruitment drive is being taken forward on a phased basis and so far during the first phase more than 20 local people have secured new jobs at Rowanbank – these include support service staff, nursing assistants and safety staff. Over the next 18 months there will be further job opportunities for local people as we continue to recruit a wide range of staff including nurses, administrative staff and support staff. These posts will be advertised in the local press and job centres. A number of recruitment open days have already been held at Kirkintilloch and Springburn job centres and further events are planned over the next 18 months.
Factfile

Number of beds – 74 beds
Number of wards – 8
Total investment – £19 million
Number of staff – around 300
Average length of stay – 3-4 years

Common myths and misconceptions

Medium secure care centres are a type of prison

False – Secure care centres are NHS hospitals which provide vital mental health services and the people treated there are patients not prisoners.

All patients admitted will have committed an offence

False – In fact it is estimated that around one third of patients treated in medium secure centres will not have committed any offence.

Rowanbank Clinic is just a mini Carstairs

False – Rowanbank is very different from the State Hospital Carstairs. Any patients who are considered to pose a serious risk to themselves or others and require to be cared for in a high security setting will continue to be admitted to the State Hospital. They will stay there until they are well enough to be transferred to a medium or low secure care facility for ongoing treatment.
Other secure care services in Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Low secure inpatient mental health services are currently provided at Leverndale and Dykebar Hospitals. Community outreach services are provided by clinicians working in specialist multidisciplinary teams to provide care in the community. We also have forensic mental health teams, a forensic learning disability team, a forensic adolescent team and a forensic women’s team. Outreach court and prison liaison services are also provided across Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Location map