

Mental health is critical to everyone and spans all generations. Demand for effective and efficient mental health care provision continues to grow, not only in the UK but in developing healthcare systems around the world. In response, the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) is pioneering the latest treatments and access solutions for some of society's most vulnerable, says CNWL Chief Executive, Claire Murdoch

Using your head



CNWL is one of the largest and most diverse health care organisations in the UK, specialising in mental health care, addiction treatment, physical health and sexual health and HIV services and prisons. In terms of clinical research there has been a massive underdevelopment in the field of mental health, particularly when compared to that of heart or cancer research. But drawing upon its staff of world-leading mental health consultants, CNWL is now at the fore in mental health care with pioneering

treatments and innovative solutions to increase patient access.

"Effective mental health care is increasingly important," says CNWL Trust Chief Executive, Claire Murdoch. "We all have mental health and we all know that when our mental health is better, we look after ourselves better."

Increasing access, particularly for young people, has also been a central theme of the Trust's plans. The Trust's innovative approaches are designed to achieve earlier assessment, earlier diagnosis and more effective treatment for young people sooner.

"One in four can expect a serious case of depression in their lives. There are very serious mental illnesses that might start in youth, in adolescence, including major psychotic illnesses

– it is very common," Claire explains. "We don't just talk about physical health to cover all physical ailments like heart disease or diabetes. It's really the same thing for mental health – there are many different individual mental illnesses."

Continuing innovation

Modern public attitudes to mental health care continue to improve day by day. And the NHS, through initiatives in communities, school and workplaces, has come to realise the inextricable link between treatments for both the mind and the body.

"'Mental health' is a lazy term because it can cover anything from post traumatic stress, eating disorders, obsessional disorders, anxiety, depression to various psychotic disorders," says

CLAIRE MURDOCH



Claire Murdoch is Chief Executive of CNWL and leads the organisation. This includes the Trust's financial performance and the quality and standards of the clinical services. Claire is a registered mental health nurse and has over 30 years NHS experience. In June this year she was also appointed National Director for Mental Health at NHS England, sharing her time between both positions.

Claire. "But we're more enlightened now about how to help people live better, happier, healthier lives, and generally to look after themselves better."

The February 2016 Mental Health Taskforce report for the NHS is symptomatic of this new progressive era of mental health care. It was designed to increase funding and access to areas of mental health care, which may have been traditionally unavailable. The report placed the experience of people with mental health problems at the centre of it, with 20,000 respondents highlighting 'the changes they wanted to see so that they could fulfil their life ambitions and take their places as equal citizens in our society!'

"Timely mental health support can unlock all sorts of better outcomes and savings to the economy," says Claire. "Billions of pounds are lost from days taken off sick due to mental illness. So this is certainly an area where the Trust is trying to make significant improvements."

As part of the Trust's commitment to improving both the patient and carer experience, an innovative redesign of its mental health services is planned. "In the community we're really trying to push the boundaries of integrated services, physical and mental healthcare in long term condition management," says Claire.

A new Single Point of Access (SPA) is a one-stop access point for the Trust's adult community mental health services. SPA will bring together GPs, carers, and other statutory and third sector providers to process emergency and routine referrals; it offers clinical advice priorities referrals and signpost patients to relevant services. Such easing of access is critical, particularly when involving mental health care.

"Early diagnosis can lead to early treatment and better outcomes in nearly every single mental illness. We have to get much better at raising awareness and spotting the early signs through a large programme of training for people like health visitors and GPs."

The New Home Treatment Rapid Response Teams (HTRRT) is an urgent response facility for urgent and emergency referrals into adult secondary care mental health services, enabling community mental health services to deliver care in line with the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat.

"We're trying to push the boundaries of how quickly you can get people home safely, because



most people recover better in their own beds and are less likely to get hospital-acquired infection," says Claire. "Home Treatment Response Teams (HTTRT) can be dispatched within a hour if the call is locally based. That's 24/7, 365 days a year."

New Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) are also shaping a fresher community wide response to mental health services. Each of the boroughs that make up the Trust now holds local co-production workshops to engage with stakeholders, ensuring that the services on offer are framed to meet local requirements.

Talking therapies

When treating mild or moderate mental health problems like depression, anxiety, phobias or post traumatic stress disorders, the Trust is a significant proponent of talking therapies (psychological therapies). Part of the NHS's drive to increase general access to such therapies has come in nationalised UK talking therapies programme called IAPT, 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapies'.

"It was only a few short years ago that if you had severe depression or anxiety, you wouldn't be offered systematic or evidence-based counselling and psychological support," Claire explains. "You might have been able to buy this treatment privately at vast expense but with a phenomenal evidence base, talking therapies can now be accessed right across the country within two weeks in most cases."

"The next big push around talking therapies over the next three years ought to be to increase access and coverage and primary care for people with multiple conditions, which will be better and more cheaply managed and will be more humane with more psychological input."

And with financial pressures on UK NHS trusts well publicised, benefits of IAPT go further than just their excellent track record and clinical effectiveness. Claire goes on to explain; "When you do a full cost-benefit analysis, talking therapies are not expensive at all. They're really cost effective and help people make the link between what you think, what you do and how you feel."



CNWL International

With a commitment to continual clinical innovations at the highest level, CNWL engages with organisations across the world in key healthcare regions like Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Indeed, many CNWL experts have been called upon to contribute to national and international health strategies and policies.

"We love to work internationally," says Claire. "We learn so much from talking to these countries – we like to see global collaboration around some common problems like living longer and living with complexity. The global burden of health has changed – non-communicable diseases were once the main concern. Now it's depression."

In terms of international development in healthcare, mental health care provision for developing countries can still be an invisible problem, sometimes overlooked or stigmatised as an issue. As such, developing healthcare systems in countries like China and India have much to learn from the Trust's pioneering treatments and initiatives to increase access.

"A quarter of the mental illnesses in the world are in China and India," says Claire. "In India suicide was the eighth largest killer in 2010. Yet less than one in 10 people get any form of recognition of their illness for treatment. In China the figure stands at one in six."

Consequently, and as part of a raft of new Indo-UK government healthcare partnerships, the Trust is engaged in scoping work as part of the wider Indo-UK Institute of Health (IUIH) collaboration to set up 11 healthcare and education sites across India. This project has seen the Trust specifically advise on the

Punjab region and their addictions services.

"In the UK the Trust runs the National Club Drug Clinic for many specialised addictions, from gambling to 'club drugs' and legal highs," says Clinical Consultant at CNWL, Dr Pramod Prabhakaran. "Although Indian medical training is very good, we need to supplement that with what we emphasise here in the UK. For example the Trust sent a delegation to the Punjab in 2013, in partnership with IUIH, to set up addiction units for drugs and alcohol."

In China CNWL is now running clinical observation programmes for senior doctors and nurses, covering integrated health and social care across the nation's entire healthcare system. These are designed to engage and promote policy development, and can range from two weeks to three months.

"In the last year I've been working with a research organisation in China on developing integrated care for the elderly," says Pramod. "Our work in Shanghai looks at the data of 20 million patients, at different sections of the population and the costs in different years of life."

"All countries across the globe are concerned with a growing elderly population," Claire explains. "In China particularly, they are not aware of the problem of dementia so the Trust is pushing heavily to promote a better understanding of the disease."

Future for the Trust

As the Trust increases mental health care access for its most vulnerable patients, its future goals are certainly ambitious. But with some of the world's leading consultants driving its plans, Claire is confident they can be achieved, and even exceeded.

"The main point of the Trust's five-year forward view is to increase responsiveness and access to services, both for adults and young people," says Claire. "I want to set up some real targets around waiting times and improved access. By 2020 I would very much like to think we'd improved access and reduced waiting times, particularly for children and young people."

"We will also continue to make a big push on IAPT for the treatment of common health problems. This is going to be one of the quiet revolutions of our time. Last year the Trust treated 24,000 people with talking therapies. Three years ago, this wouldn't have happened. I want to see that number grow by at least another 20 per cent nationally because that will lead to a happier, healthier, and more productive nation."

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mental-Health-Taskforce-FYFV-final.pdf>

Further information

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