Accreditation for Acute Inpatient Mental Health Services (AIMS)

Why has AIMS been established?
Acute psychiatric wards can be challenging environments both for staff and patients. Accreditation for Acute Inpatient Mental Health Services (AIMS) identifies and acknowledges wards that have high standards of organisation and patient care, and supports and enables others to achieve these.
AIMS is a partnership between the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the British Psychological Society, the College of Occupational Therapists and the Royal College of Nursing. It is thus led by the professional bodies of those staff most involved in inpatient care.

Why choose to join AIMS?
Membership of AIMS will help wards demonstrate compliance with the Healthcare Commission’s ‘Standards for Better Health’ and will support implementation of NICE guidelines and the National Service Framework.
We also worked in collaboration with the Healthcare Commission to ensure that our standards were compatible with those used in the recent improvement review of acute inpatient mental health services.

Benefits of membership
- Accreditation recognises the achievements of staff and reassures service users.
- Access to a national network, email discussion group and newsletter
- Provides opportunities to visit other wards and share ideas and suggestions

How does accreditation work?
Member wards are supported through a 12-month review process that incorporates:
- self-review, including staff, patient and carer questionnaires;
- a one-day peer-review visit;
- a recommendation of accreditation status by the AIMS Accreditation Advisory Committee;
- ratification of accreditation status by the Royal College of Psychiatrists;
- support to identify and prioritise problems and set achievable targets for change.

Accreditation is valid for up to 4 years, subject to satisfactory completion of an annual self-review.

Contact Details
For more information about AIMS, please contact the AIMS Project Team:
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