

### **Ward Staffing in KMPT**

Inpatient units in KMPT are spread across the geographical area of Kent & Medway with all units offering a 24 hour 365 day per year service.

There would always be a proportion of qualified nursing staff on duty on the units, although the qualified to unqualified ratios from one unit to another vary. In addition, there are variances in the staff to bed ratios. This is largely a result of differing clinical needs in each specialty. For example, Forensic services and Psychiatric Intensive Care Units (PICUs) support patients who present higher levels of risk and/or disturbance and therefore require a higher ratio of qualified staff. On the other hand, wards for older people with continuing care needs have patient who have higher basic care needs and subsequently often have a higher unqualified staff ratio.

In any mental health unit, staff may also be needed to ensure that the heightened observation levels can be safely met on a 24 hour basis. Many wards will have more than one client needing within arms length or within eyesight observations at any one time along with others who need observing at intervals between 10 and 30 minutes. More clients now need this level of care as a result of a more acutely ill inpatient population.

Some of our units however have lower nursing figures because other staff such as occupational therapists and psychotherapists contribute significantly to the daily patient care in those areas; this is particularly the case in Eating disorders and CAMHS wards.