

Inspection of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Centre of the Psychiatry Clinic of the University of Tartu Hospital

Advisers to the Chancellor of Justice paid an unannounced visit to the Child and Adolescent Department of the Psychiatry Clinic of University of Tartu Hospital on 5 May 2018. The advisors to the Chancellor of Justice and experts visited the centre's premises, spoke with the hospital's staff and patients, and reviewed the documents of the implementation of involuntary emergency psychiatric care and restraining measures.

There are two departments in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Centre of the Psychiatry Clinic – the department for children up to 13 years of age and the department for adolescents. There are 13 beds in the children's department and 12 beds in the department for adolescents. During the inspection visit, there were six patients in the children's department and nine patients in the department for adolescents, and there were boys and girls in both departments. There are two to three employees (nurses, carers) in each department 24 hours a day, who work according to a schedule. Activity instructors also deal with the patients during the day. There is a psychiatrist on duty at the hospital at nights and weekends. As the medical status of the patients is such that they need to be approached individually, then it is important that both departments have enough employees present at all times. The hospital has considered this as much as possible.

The rooms in the children's and adolescents' departments have one or two beds. The toilet and shower room are in the hallway and both departments have three toilets. A patient can lock the toilet from the inside, but the medical staff can enter the room with their own key if there is reason to believe that the patient may harm themselves. Both departments have a dining room and leisure rooms – arts and crafts workshops and classrooms. The patients of the children's department can also spend time in the playroom. Each department has a cloakroom for overcoats. Patients can keep their personal belongings in the lockers in the cloakroom.

The conditions in both departments are good and the leisure activities of the patients have been well thought through. Children and adolescents can spend time in playrooms and yards. It is positive that activity therapists work with the patients every day and organise hobby activities for them. The children and adolescents are allowed to wear the clothes they like. It is commendable that the staff of both departments cooperate closely with parents/guardians as well as with the child protection specialists of local governments. For example, round tables of specialists responsible for the welfare of children are organised in the hospital. The children and adolescents say that the hospital team are supportive and friendly and that an employee is present at the department at all times. The hospital uses an electronic documentation system. Extraordinary cases are documented in a separate register and analysed with the entire team.

There are problems in guaranteeing the privacy of patients and in documenting the use of restraining measures. Patients must be able to make phone calls in privacy, but this is not always possible at present.

The hospital should also make the phone call procedure more flexible. Video surveillance may be used in hospital rooms only if this is unavoidable considering the patient's state of health. The implementation of restraining measures and continuation thereof should always be documented in detail. An employee of the hospital must always be there with the patient when the latter is mechanically restrained.