

Inspection visit to the acute care department of Ahtme Hospital

On 27 October 2018, the advisers to the Chancellor of Justice inspected the acute care department of Ahtme Hospital. The Chancellor of Justice last inspected the activities of Ahtme Hospital in 2015. The advisers to the Chancellor of Justice and a healthcare expert took a tour of the premises of the hospital's acute care department, talked to the hospital's staff and patients and reviewed the documents concerning the implementation of involuntary emergency psychiatric care and restraining measures.

The acute care department has 25 beds. There were 17 patients (10 men and 7 women) in the department on the day of the inspection visit, six male patients were receiving involuntary treatment.

There are four nurses in the department on working days (their working hours may differ somewhat on the basis of the rota, e.g. 9:00 to 20:00; 8:00 to 16:00; 9:00 to 18:00) as well as a nurse in charge (8:00 to 16:00) and four carers (who usually work 12-hour shifts of 8:00 to 20:00; 20.00 to 8:00), one food server and a hostess (8:00 to 16:00). There are four psychiatrists on duty in the department on working days (9:00 to 16:00). Two nurses, three carers and the psychiatrist on duty stay in the building in the evenings and overnight (20:00 to 8:00). The composition of the team at weekends is almost the same as on working days, but the nurse in charge and the hostess are not at work. The psychiatrist on duty also works at weekends. The team of Ahtme Hospital has three psychologists and two occupational therapists who organise the joint activities of the patients in the acute care department.

The activity room and the enclosed yard of the acute care department made a good impression. The patients' rooms and shared rooms of the department are clean. All patients can use lockable boxes for their personal belongings. It is positive that a sports therapist and an art therapist work in the department. Information exchange between the shifts of medical staff is well organised. Nurses often make entries about the condition of restrained patients and provided a thorough overview of this. Staff members confirmed that the members of the hospital team support each other and participate in in-service training when possible.

The hospital must better guarantee the privacy of the patients of the acute care department during hygiene procedures. The patients receiving involuntary treatment should be allowed to wear their own clothes if possible and if they wish to do so. The department's activity room must be open to patients during the hours specified in the internal procedure. The furnishings of the rooms must be updated to ensure their compliance with legislation.

The psychiatrist must justify the need for the use of restraining measures and the circumstances that justify the need to continue using the measures clearly and exhaustively in documents. A healthcare professional must always be with a mechanically restrained patient. The use of nappies must be avoided if the medical status of the restrained patient permits this at all and the patient should be helped to the toilet instead.

A decision on involuntary treatment must always be prepared if the doctor does not allow a patient to leave the hospital when they wish to do so. Patients should be able to walk outside at least once a day.