

ABOUT THE STATE HOSPITAL

The State Hospital is the only high security psychiatric hospital covering Scotland and Northern Ireland. Employing around 680 staff, the Hospital is in Lanarkshire in central Scotland, midway between the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. It is one of four high secure hospitals in the UK.

The main aim is to rehabilitate patients, ensuring safe transfer to appropriate lower levels of security. The Forensic Mental Health Services Managed Care Network (Forensic Network) is hosted by the State Hospital and effective partnership working is in place across the Forensic Network to ensure patients are transferred as required.

Patients are admitted to the State Hospital by law because of their dangerous, violent, or criminal propensities. However, not all patients have been convicted of an offence, but those without formal convictions will have displayed seriously aggressive behaviours, including physical or sexual aggression / violence. Patients can be admitted from and discharged to other NHS hospitals, prisons, courts, and the community.

Although the State Hospital shares the same values, aims, and challenges as the rest of the NHS in Scotland, it is unique because it has the dual responsibility of caring for very ill, detained patients as well as protecting them, the public and staff from harm. In other words, a twin aim: care and treatment, and public safety.

The high security nature of the Hospital prohibits unannounced visits from members of the public. All staff, volunteers and visitors must adhere to security procedures.



All access, egress and movement within the Hospital is supervised 24 hours a day, and comprehensive contingency arrangements remain appropriate and relevant, reflecting the potentially serious nature of emergency situations which could arise within the State Hospital environment.

Well established relationships exist with the Mental Health Tribunal Service for Scotland and the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland. Partnership working with South Lanarkshire Council is also well established and provides social work services for patients and their families in addition to liaising with patients designated Mental Health Officers (MHOs) across the country.

The governing body of the Hospital is the State Hospitals Board for Scotland which is accountable to Scottish Ministers through the Scottish Government, for the quality of care and the efficient use of resources.

Patients are treated in accommodation appropriate to their needs and in an environment that supports rehabilitation. There are 140 high-secure beds (plus four beds for emergency use) for male patients requiring maximum secure care: 12 beds specifically for patients with an intellectual disability. Additionally, the new dedicated Women's Service opened on 21 July 2025 with a capacity to care for up to six females. Wards take the form of four hubs with each unit comprising three 12-bedded areas (i.e. 36 beds per hub).



Therapies and activities are an important part of care and treatment at the State Hospital. Taking part can promote patient recovery and contribute towards achieving individual patient care and treatment goals. Patients have access to a wide range of therapies and activities as well as a Health Centre and Atrium where they can access the activity group room, café, library, shop, and bank. The Health Centre meets the primary healthcare needs of patients. Services include screening interventions, disease / condition monitoring, treatment, and management.



Specialist treatments for specific offending behaviours are required to reduce the risk posed by patients to themselves and others.



A typical patient is around 39 years old with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia but many have multiple diagnoses including affective disorder, learning disabilities, bipolar, and depression. Around 64% of patients are 'restricted' patients within the jurisdiction of Scottish Ministers; in other words, a prisoner who has committed a crime but is mentally unfit to go to prison. The current average length of stay is five years, with individual lengths of stay ranging from less than one month to over 38 years. Each patient is cared for by a multi-disciplinary clinical team, and all patients have an up-to-date care and treatment plan. There are around 35-40 admissions and discharges each year.

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