

Patient injuries quadruple in Surrey's largest mental health trust area

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This article has been amended to include statistics relating to the total number of patient restraint incidents across the trust in the relevant timeframes, and to clarify this number is what the trust's quote (par 7) refers to.

The number of patient injuries at Surrey's largest mental health trust have risen since the opening of its new inpatient facility last year.

Data obtained through a freedom of information (FOI) request to Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SABP) found that the number of patient injuries across the county had more than quadrupled in the space of two years.

In the 2023/24 financial year, 92 service user injuries were reported across the trust, which shot up to 365 incidents in 2024/25 and 431 in 2025/26 – meaning more than one incident per day on average was reported in the most recent complete financial year.

A total of 141 incidents had been reported in the ongoing 2026/27 financial year at the time of the FOI response.

In addition, the number of incidents in which patients were restrained also leapt to a five year high in the 2025/26 year. A total 1,287 incidents were recorded, up from 826 the previous year.

An SABP spokesperson stressed that not all patient injuries reported were related to restraint incidents. "The use of restrictive practice is a very complex area and reducing restrictive practices is a trust priority," they said.

The spokesperson told the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) that the sharp rise in reported restraint incidents was "due to the opening of Silverwood's inpatient services last year".

Silverwood, located in Chertsey, began admitting patients in February 2025 and was designed to help Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust's work to care for acutely mentally ill people.

The facility boasts 64 ensuite bedrooms across four wards, and was established to replace the old Abraham Cowley Unit (ACU).

However, the trust's FOI response did not declare the number of staff injuries in this same time period, as it would have exceeded the cost limit on requests as each record would have to be reviewed manually.

The FOI response also revealed major changes in the trust's use of restraint against acutely ill patients, with the reported number of "prone" restraints – where a patient is forced face down on the ground – dropping to zero in compliance with recent laws.

The Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018 was brought in to improve transparency in the use of such force in restraining patients, and contains guidance against the use of prone restraints.

Better known as Seni's Law, it was implemented following the death of Olanrewaju "Seni" Lewis, who died in 2010 after being restrained at Bethlem Royal Hospital in Bromley.

While 20 prone restraint incidents were reported at the trust in the 2021/22 financial year, that number dropped into single figures for the following few years before reaching zero in 2025/26.

At the same time, the reported use of chemical restraints has risen substantially, with this jumping from 11 in 2022/23 to 830 in 2025/26 – and a further 333 in 2026/27 so far.

The SABP spokesperson added: "We record all cases when restrictive interventions are used in line with Seni's Law, officially the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act – which was fully introduced in 2022.

"It is also important to note that the number of recorded injuries may be caused by many reasons, the majority of which are not related to restraints."

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

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Sabp Silverwood (Credit: Google Maps)