

# Selecting Air Conditioning Guards For High Secure Mental Health Units

When considering the right air conditioning unit for psychiatric intensive care units (PICU) several factors are at play.

PICU's are dedicated wards for adult patient to deliver inpatient mental health care assessment and full treatment to those that are suffering severe **mental health disorders**.

Due to the level of risk the patients pose to themselves and others, PICU's are designed to look after patients who cannot be managed on open psychiatric wards.

With this in mind, architects and specifiers must search for an **air conditioning guard** that is safe and secure. Read on to find out more...

## Key Features To Consider For High-Secure Mental Health Hospitals



Service users in **PICU's** need a sense of belonging and the design can enhance or restrict these feelings.

This is because the environment they're in can increase or reduce feelings of physical security, promote/reduce mobility and impact the patients' health.

Therefore, the key features to consider are **anti-ligature**, rounded edges and corners, high strength, grilles and having no gaps or joints.

## A Durable Solution With Air Conditioning Units

Architects and specifiers are continually seeking ways to reduce the risk of self-harm and suicide in **custodial settings**, and it's especially important for PICU's.

Due to the high risk of vandalism, self-harm, and inflicted injuries to others in PICU's— specifiers should search for an anti-ligature air conditioning **guard** that is durable and able to withstand the demands of these environments.

When vandalism occurs, users can destruct an **air conditioning guard**— or any fixture - until there are sharp objects or exposed ligatures, causing a significant risk to staff and Service Users alike. For this reason, air conditioning units need to be **durable** to keep all service users safe.

## Anti-Ligature Air Conditioning Guards For High-Secure Mental Health Environments

Suicide risks can come from ligature points that are above head height and even from guards that are **below waist height** too.

For this reason, it's necessary to select an air conditioning unit that is **anti-ligature** to keep all individuals safe and secure. This is because air conditioning guards can be above head height and below head height as well.

To guarantee all ligature risks are minimised, you should search for an anti-ligature **air conditioning guard** that follows these certain characteristics:

## Small grilles



Large grilles can pose ligature risks and can be used to place weapons to hurt other individuals. We recommend IP3X grilles to ensure the grilles are anti-ligature and nothing can be attached to them.

## No Large Gaps Or Joints

A fully-sealed air conditioning guard with no gaps or joints is useful to fully protect all service users in a PICU.

PICUs, nowadays, provide increasing levels of freedom to Service Users, giving them access to certain home comforts. Whilst this may alleviate boredom – and subsequent stress – any visible gaps can pose opportunities for individuals to secure ligature points, stash contraband and damage appliances.

Therefore, it's important that air conditioning guards are secured firmly to a wall using high-quality anti-pick mastic and that they are routinely checked to ensure no gaps become present.

## No Sharp Edges And Bullnose Corners

The corners and edges of your air conditioning guard should also be a key design consideration, as any sharp element could be used to inflict injury on others and the Service User themself.

We refer to rounded corners as “bullnose” for obvious reasons. Not only to they provide a smoother surface, but they also make it more challenging for a Service User to damage the corner of the guard, increasing its longevity.

Of course, if Service Users are also unsteady on their feet, these rounded corners will also mitigate any risk of accidental injury if a user were to fall against it.

## Security Locks And Fixings

Any guard must provide sufficient access for cleaning and maintenance, but exposed fixings and security locks can become a ligature risk for mental health patients.

When selecting an anti-ligature guard – whether air conditioning or radiator – close attention should be paid to the security locks and additional fixings.

## Conclusion

With these anti-ligature features in place, there will be a **comfortable environment** that minimises injuries, whilst encouraging feelings of security.

When working within sensitive and caring environments like PICU's, we believe that you can't afford to compromise on any key features. If you'd like to discuss how to achieve a secure environment with air conditioning guards, [contact us](#) today.



## About Us

Contour produces a range of innovative, safe surface temperature systems for healthcare, education, mental health, commercial and secure sectors, working in close partnership and collaborating with architects, M&E engineers, NHS Trusts, local authorities, design consultants and contractors to deliver outstanding safe heating solutions.

Contour is the exclusive partner of **BioCote®** anti-microbial technology for LST and anti-ligature radiators. BioCote® additives reduce bacteria by up to 99.9%. Contour combines an extensive range of colour-paints with BioCote® for a durable, high-quality finish.

Contour's heating solutions offer secure, single-person quick access to radiator guard interiors for regular deep cleaning and maintenance. Each year, Contour save the NHS millions of pounds in cleaning costs, therefore delivering cleaner, safer environments. Contour is redefining the marketplace and therefore many regards us as a design and innovation leader within the industry.

Contour has a quality-first philosophy. Our customer-focused team possess a 'can-do attitude, they take pride in developing solutions for your heating requirements.