



Department
of Health



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27 AUG 2014

To: Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Boards

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS CARE CONCORDAT: Making change happen in your area

We are writing to make sure that leaders in every area recognise that they are expected to sign up to local declarations, demonstrating how they will implement the standards in the Crisis Care Concordat locally.

In February this year, the Department of Health and Home Office published the mental health Crisis Care Concordat. This sets out the standards that people experiencing a mental health crisis should expect of the public services that respond to their needs. It is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281242/36353_Mental_Health_Crisis_accessible.pdf

The Concordat is a joint agreement, written and agreed by over 20 national signatory organisations, including NHS England, the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the LGA and ADASS, and the medical Royal Colleges.

Collaborative working

We are writing to describe the range of opportunities for Health and Wellbeing Boards to access support to develop a mental health concordat for their local communities, and to urge you to get involved in this work. These crisis responses typically involve the police, social services, mental health services and emergency care. The Concordat is about improving the way these services work together, to make sure that people in crisis get the care they need in the appropriate place.

Use of police cells

You will be aware that in around a third of the cases in which police officers detain people they believe to be in a mental health crisis, these people end up being taken to police custody, despite committing no crime. Last year, this happened nearly 8,000 times. The Concordat includes a commitment to halve the numbers who end up in police cells in this financial year, and to end the practice of placing under 18s in police cells.

National commitment

The Concordat is about the national commitment and action required to improve this situation. But we know that this is not enough on its own. This is why the Concordat states that all local areas should produce their own Local Crisis Declarations by December this year, because meaningful action and change happens on the ground, and every area is different and requires unique approaches and solutions to bring about the improvements we all want to see in place.

Mandate

All of this follows the refreshed Mandate from the Government to NHS England, which includes a new requirement for the NHS that "every community has plans to ensure no one in mental health crisis will be turned away from health services".

Local leadership

Because local leadership is such a vital part of this work, we are asking that you each consider the role your own Health and Wellbeing Board can make in helping partners come together to make these Declarations in your areas.

Mind: there to help with local Crisis Declarations

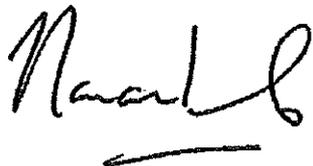
The Department of Health has contracted Mind, the mental health charity, to help support you in this work. They have produced a Concordat website at <http://www.crisiscareconcordat.org.uk/> which contains a map that will display progress on ensuring every local area has a Declaration in place. There are also templates available on the website for Declarations, and information on what these should contain and which organisational partners should sign up to them.

Mind and the Department of Health are both available to provide advice and support in your areas, and are running a series of regional events. To find out more about this, please contact the team at crisiscareconcordat@mind.org.uk.

Of course, we know that many areas have already made a strong start on this work, and we certainly look forward to hearing about more examples of local engagement and success. The NHS has already set the requirement, in its guidance *Operational resilience and capacity planning for 2014/15*, for Declarations to be in place. This document is available at:

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/op-res-cap-plan-1415.pdf>

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Norman Lamb in black ink, featuring a stylized 'N' and 'L' with a horizontal line underneath.

Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP

Handwritten signature of Mike Penning in black ink, featuring a stylized 'M' and 'P' with a horizontal line underneath.

Rt Hon Mike Penning MP