London’s Crisis Care Programme: Health Based Place of Safety work stream

Briefing for Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs

Case for change

The Better Health for London report (2014) in line with the National Crisis Care Concordat, the Mental Health Five Year Forward View and more recently the NHS Five Year Forward View next steps has put the spotlight on mental health crisis care services so that we deliver high-quality, coordinated care for some of the most vulnerable Londoners.

London’s mental health crisis care system is an example of an area under pressure and our local population is suffering because of it. The difference in care for people with mental health issues as opposed to physical ones is still disproportionate and our service users and all partners realise that the status quo isn’t good enough. Service users are often denied access to Health Based Place of Safety sites and A&E departments, left in the back of police cars and ambulances, or transferred unnecessarily between A&E departments and mental health trusts due to a lack of holistic, integrated care.

The voice of our service users should be at the heart of the changes needed to the mental health crisis care system. People continue to tell us the care they receive does not meet their expectations in terms of dignity, respect and high quality care, and services are often not delivered in the right environment to help people recover. They have recognised that there is an opportunity to address a forgotten service and make section 136 an active part of the crisis pathway:

- Only 14% of Londoner’s feel they have support when in a mental health crisis
- In London’s health based place of safety sites only 36% of patients felt safe in their surroundings
- Over 75% of section 136 detentions occur out of hours yet only two sites in London have 24/7 staffing
- Unfortunately this is occurring whilst Londoner’s experiencing mental health crises are in ever increasing numbers (from 2015/16 to 2016/17 section 136 detentions have increased by 19%).

All partners involved in caring for people during a mental health crisis are committed to improving the health, care and experiences of service users. Whilst there must be a focus on local action to prevent crises occurring, when a crisis does happen we want service users to have timely, high quality care, respecting individual needs, wherever they are in London. Service users have told us they want crisis care that is always available, consistent and respectful across all stages of the pathway. There are many cases that illustrate this isn’t available, resulting in A&E departments being a regular default.

Changes are also essential if we are to ensure the NHS in London is prepared for the Mental Health Act legislation changes that will come into place in the autumn. Fundamental changes include reductions in detention time from 72 to 24 hours and an increased scope in where section 136 can be used. Following recent multi-agency training workshops held at all London Mental Health Trusts, staff are aware of the legislative changes that are coming. However, there are concerns that the crisis care system isn’t ready and does not have sufficient capacity or processes in place to respond to these changes, especially if changes are likely to mean an increase in people being detained under section 136.

London’s section 136 pathway and health based place of safety specification

Throughout 2016 a London wide section 136 pathway and specification for Health Based Place of Safety sites was developed and endorsed by all partners across the crisis care system. This involved significant engagement across London, led by Healthy London Partnership. Over 300 service users from across London were involved in the development of the guidance as well as key stakeholders from London’s acute and mental health trusts, London Ambulance Service, London’s three police forces, local authorities and the voluntary sector.
The guidance has since been endorsed by the London Urgent and Emergency Care and Mental Health Boards, including the Cavendish Square Group (Mental Health Trust Chief Executives), Urgent and Emergency Care and Mental Health Clinical Leadership Groups and all partner agencies involved in the pathway. The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, also recognises the importance of this work and the significant multi-agency partnership working. The Mayor launched the guidance at an event at City Hall in late 2016 and continues to show his support alongside the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden.

Since the guidance was launched London’s crisis care system has focussed on operationalising the section 136 pathway and this commitment is articulated in all of London’s Mental Health Sustainability and Transformation Plans. A London model of care for section 136 is recognised across all stakeholder organisations that London is committed to. However, implementation of the pathway does need to include the wider crisis care pathways; from local models which prevent a crisis occurring, through to appropriate follow up pathways, including adequate provision of inpatient beds.

**What does the new model of crisis care include?**

The key components of the new model of care include:

- Ensuring a pan-London approach to care where individuals are taken to the nearest place of safety from their pick-up location (despite where they reside) and following assessment, if necessary, transferred promptly to inpatient services at their local mental health trust;
- Ensuring system transparency around capacity at Health Based Place of Safety sites, as well as robust escalation processes when capacity is full (in line with the NHSE (London) ‘compact’ due to go live this Autumn);
- A dedicated, 24/7 staffed service at London’s Health Based Place of Safety sites;
- Increased physical health competencies at Health Based Place of Safety sites to ensure unnecessary referrals to A&E departments and more timely, integrated care;
- Streamlined pathways between A&E departments and Health Based Place of Safety sites, for when individuals require more intensive physical health treatment, including the use of telephone triage, robust information transfers and timely physical health assessments in the A&E department.

It has been recognised that to meet the new standard of care a whole system change is required across health and social care in London. Stakeholders and service users across the system have identified ways to support an improved model of care; this has included establishing centres of excellence to provide a dedicated, specialist service for those detained under section 136.

This concept has been compared to other developments in London's Urgent and Emergency Care system which has seen centres of excellence in stroke and major trauma services. This shows that London is capable of significant transformation across our system and we can build on these successes and transform the care for those with mental health needs.

**What progress have we made so far?**

A detailed options appraisal has taken place over the past six months to look at how London’s crisis care system can implement the new model of care and create centres of excellence where dedicated, 24/7 staffing exists at Health Based Place of Safety sites. The options appraisal has been steered by London’s Crisis Care Steering Group and supported by a more front-line operational group and dedicated service user and carer advisory groups.

The options appraisal has reviewed all current Health Based Place of Safety sites across London and looked at new options against criteria defined by representatives across the system including improved patient care and system efficiencies, whilst also assessing the impact on patient and staff experience, workforce, travel times and finance. This process has been done for adult and children and young people’s services.

Significant engagement with system leaders, clinical and operational staff and service users and their carers has shaped the options appraisal. This has included identifying the optimal number of sites for London, London’s most viable sites and the preferred option for sites. This detailed analysis took
place using available data, including areas where section 136 detentions are prevalent, as well as more subjective assessments from both staff and service users.

Following the objective and subjective assessments against the different criteria, as well as continued engagement across the system, a high level model of care has been proposed. This includes different options across London which now need further testing with both clinical and system leaders and locally with CCGs, mental health trusts, local authorities and service users.

**What do we need local systems to do over the next six months?**

It has been agreed that mental health STP programmes will lead on further engagement in their area over the next six months, in order to come to a preferred option for Health Based Place of Safety sites in London. This will include sharing the model of care and pathway changes with local stakeholders, including senior and operational staff at mental health trusts, commissioners, Directors of Adult Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Boards, HealthWatch as well as discussing proposals at local boards and forums.

These discussions will also focus on other system changes that are required at borough and CCG, sub regional and London level, to enable the new model of care to be implemented.

It is acknowledged that this new model of care will require significant changes in workforce models across health and social care, commissioning and contractual arrangements, facilities and changes in patient flow; however the strong case for change emphasises the need for these changes to occur. The commitment and support from across the system, including clinical leaders from both the mental health and UEC systems is a sign that status quo cannot stay the same and we now have an opportunity in London to make a difference for London’s most vulnerable patients.

For further information regarding the London Health Based Place of Safety programme please contact Emily Treder, Programme Manager, Healthy London Partnership - e.treder@nhs.net.