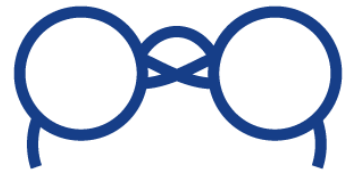


In focus

Healthy London Partnership



London's Section 136 Pathway and Health Based Places of Safety

19 December 2017

Healthy London Partnership is supporting London's crisis care system to positively transform the quality of care for individuals detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act. This work is built on the foundations of the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat, a national agreement between services and agencies involved in the care and support of people in crisis.

Background

Section 136 of the Mental Health Act (s136) allows for someone thought by the police to have a mental disorder, and who may cause harm to themselves or another, to be detained in a public place and taken to a safe place. Usually this is a health-based place of safety where a mental health assessment can be carried out.

Our research indicates that Londoners repeatedly say the care they receive does not meet their basic expectations of dignity, respect and high quality compassionate care, and services are often not delivered in the right environment to help people recover.

The current situation in London

- The number of Londoner's experiencing mental health crises is continuing to increase with section 136 detentions increasing by 19% in the last two years. This is occurring at a time when:
- Only 14% of Londoner's feel they have support when in a mental health crisis;
- Patients wait long periods of time, in some cases up to twenty-two hours, in the back of an ambulance or police vehicle unable to access the care they need.
- Over 75% of section 136 detentions occur out of hours yet only two of London's 20 sites have appropriate 24/7 staffing. Most people who arrive at a Health Based Place of Safety as an s136 patient must wait while staff are called from inpatient wards.
- A&E departments are often used as the default when sites have no capacity to accept new patients. On average, half of the patients taken to A&E are waiting longer than 12 hours in a distressing environment;
- Only 36% of patients felt safe in London's Health Based Place of Safety sites. Reports from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and social care in England, have identified that many of the Health Based Place of Safety sites in London are not fit for purpose with a lack of dignity, comfort and confidentiality for patients.

London's new section 136 pathway and Health Based Place of Safety specification

In response to this, we have worked with over 300 Londoners who have experienced mental illness and their carers, staff from our crisis care partner organisations: London's police forces, London Ambulance Service, local authorities and NHS hospital trusts and mental health trusts. Together we developed guidance for a new healthcare pathway for patients detained under s136 and a specification for the Health Based Place of Safety sites where they would receive care, this was launched by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, in December 2016.

London's crisis care system is now focused on ensuring it meets the new standards set out in London's new section 136 pathway and Health Based Place of Safety specification, a key component of this being a 24/7 staffed service. Healthy London partnership is supporting London's crisis care system on a range of work to meet this new guidance. Service users and carers, supported by the National Service User Network (NSUN), are involved to ensure the work continues focusing on the needs of patients and improving their care.

A new model for health based place of safety sites across London

A key part of improving crisis care is ensuring patients have access to a Health Based Place of Safety 24/7; this includes skilled, specialist staff around the clock. There are currently twenty Health Based Place of Safety sites in London. The demand across these sites means dedicated staff cannot be available at all sites 24/7. Therefore, we are exploring how these sites might be configured differently across London to improve the pathway for individuals detained under s136 and meet the key standards set out in the guidelines.

Stakeholders, including service users and carers, across the system have reviewed current Health Based Place of Safety sites and support the establishment of centres of excellence to provide a dedicated, specialist service for those detained under section 136. New Health Based Place of Safety site configuration options have been developed. These proposals will take into consideration a range of factors including, improving patient and carer experience, maximising staff experience, areas of high prevalence of s136, and proximity to other mental health and acute services.

Potential proposals are being explored locally with stakeholders involved in the crisis care system to consider how a new model could work for local areas and what further work might be needed to support this. Feedback from these discussions will help to establish the preferred site configuration across London, which will be consulted on in 2018.

How can you get involved?

We encourage you to share this information to help outline why the quality of care for patients detained under s136 in London needs to improve.

➔ **Download London's section 136 pathway and Health Based Place of Safety specification:** <https://www.healthylondon.org/resource/mental-health-crisis-care-londoners/>