

Future Development of Mental Health Services for Older People

A report by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health

Commissioned by the Devon Older People's Strategic Partnership and Torbay Older People Mental Health Forum

1. What is the Devon Older People's Strategic Partnership

The Devon Older People's Strategic Partnership is the lead forum for developing older people's health and social care across Devon, excluding Plymouth and Torbay. The partnership includes membership from the NHS, Social Services, the voluntary sector and representatives from older people's forums.

The main aim of the Devon Older People's Strategic Partnership is to deliver better outcomes for older people with mental health problems and their carers by working more effectively together to improve services and make best use of our collective resources.

2. What is the Torbay Older People Mental Health Forum?

The Forum is the focus for the planning of older people's mental health services. It links into the Local Implementation Group for Mental Health for Torbay and to the South Devon Older People Mental Health Group. This is a complex system, but it aims to ensure that older people are able to access appropriate mental health services without discrimination in terms of age or disability. One of its tasks has been to draft a strategy, which will be reviewed in the light of the report by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health.

The Forum has representation from local statutory, independent and voluntary sector services and from carers.

3. What is the background to the review by The Sainsbury Centre?

The Devon Older People's Strategic Partnership commissioned The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, a leading national charity, to conduct a review at its inaugural meeting in August 2003.

4. What are the aims of the review?

They are to:

- Improve the experiences of older people with mental health needs and their carers
- Evaluate current services to see how well they are working and how they can be improved
- Ensure that all agencies work together seamlessly to make the best use of resources.

5. How has the review been conducted?

The review began in May 2004 and comprised two initial phases:

Phase one – designed to ensure people interested in older people's mental health had the opportunity to:

- Share their views on the problems and challenges faced by services
- Identify positive aspects to be built upon
- Express initial ideas on how services might be developed.

Phase two – nine workshops were held throughout October and November 2004, enabling people interested in services to come together and develop local solutions to some of the themes identified in phase one. The workshop themes were:

- Service User and Carer Involvement
- Primary Care
- Service Model Design
- Acute & Intermediate Care
- Whole Systems Working
- Integration
- Workforce Development
- Commissioning & Planning
- Strategic Agreement

The Executive Summary of the report will be published in early January 2005 and will be considered by the stakeholder organisations concerned. The full and final report should be available from the start of February 2005.

6. What are the review's key proposals and recommendations?

- Primary Health and Social Care as the Initial Access Point for Assessment and Support
- Development of Fully Integrated Specialist Community Mental Health Teams for Older People
- Access to Dedicated Organic and Functional Mental Illness Beds
- Rationalisation of Inpatient Units to Support Critical Mass and Dedicated Provision
- Review of Inpatient Bed Numbers in Light of Community Developments and Benchmarking
- Development of Specialist Home Support Services
- Needs based Access to Adult Mental Health Services such as Crisis Resolution Home Treatment
- Development of Community Services that Supports Recovery and Social Inclusion

- Information and Communication Strategy To Support Service User and Carer Empowerment
- Development of and Sustained Support to an Older Person's Mental Health User and Carer Network
- Leadership Across all Partner Organisations at PCT Area and Pan PCT Area Level
- Commissioning Expertise and Capacity at a PCT and Pan PCT Level.

7. Will there be changes to local services?

The review is very much about the principles and values around which services should be based in order to provide the best care, rather than where and by whom services should be provided. However, as the recommendations and proposals of the review are implemented it is very likely that there will be changes to the structure of services and the way in which they are delivered. It is too early, at this stage, to say where these changes are likely to occur and what they are likely to be, but full and thorough consultation with users, carers and other stakeholders will be carried out where it is appropriate.

8. Will staff be affected?

In the longer term, all staff working with older people with mental health needs are likely to be affected in some way as the proposals and recommendations of the review are implemented. Clear and prompt communication with staff will be a priority for all of the organisations concerned as the project progresses.

9. What are the next steps?

- The Executive Summary of the review will be published at the beginning of January 2005 and considered by the Boards of stakeholder organisations
- The full and final report by the Sainsbury Centre should be available from the start of February 2005
- Primary Care Trusts – which commission the services – will incorporate their views and thinking into their Local Delivery Plans for 2005/6
- There will be three events to raise awareness and share information during the last week in February 2005
- Discussions and planning will start to map out how future service provision may change at local and/or Devon-wide level
- Devon Older People's Strategic Partnership and Torbay Older People Mental Health Forum will work closely with all of the organisations involved in the project, monitor developments and report on progress.