



Department  
of Health

*Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP  
Minister of State for Community and Social Care*

*Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2NS*

*Tel: 020 7210 4850*

POC3000948042

Dear Colleagues,

**0 3 AUG 2015**

## **MAINTAINING MOMENTUM WITH LOCAL CRISIS CARE CONCORDAT ACTIVITY**

I am writing today to thank you and your colleagues for the transformative work that is under way in all local areas in England to improve crisis care service responses to people with mental health problems and other complex needs. The local partnerships that you have formed, bringing together health, social work and police colleagues, have responded well to the challenges set by the previous Coalition government. I recognise that your partnerships have all agreed and published high quality, multi-agency, Crisis Care Concordat action plans, and are now working hard to deliver against them.

I know that this focus on crisis care is having a positive effect. Last month, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) published figures showing that the use of police custody as a place of safety for people detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 reduced in England to 3,996 instances last year, 55% down on the figure for 2011/12. This achievement met one of the key ambitions contained in the Concordat and reflects the efforts of both the police and health professionals in making extra efforts to avoid the use of police custody. It also indicates some success in the NHS in improving the availability and capacity of crisis services and of places of safety.

The successes of certain areas stand out. Avon and Somerset has reduced the use of police cells for section 136 cases by 69% compared to the previous year. North Yorkshire opened three new health based places of safety last year and achieved a 65% reduction. Thames Valley achieved a 56% reduction, and Nottinghamshire 50%, with both areas using street triage schemes as a contribution to making their service responses to people in crisis have an appropriate and helpful outcome.

The local action plans that you have led and published to date mean that every area is now in a good position to progress the work that still needs to be done to maintain

momentum and deliver a lasting step change in the quality and provision of crisis services and responses.

Nationally too, we have made progress, and will shortly making available to you a report of the progress made by national Concordat signatories towards fulfilling the 47 commitments made in the Crisis Care Concordat when it was first published in February 2014.

#### Additional places of safety

But I know that there is more to do. The Home Secretary recently announced up to £15 million to be invested in place of safety provision in 2016/17. This is a significant step forward and further details with regards to this investment will be communicated in due course.

#### Children and young people

NHS England has been working with system partners and will shortly be issuing further guidance about the submission of local transformation plans for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, as proposed in the report *Future in Mind*. Crisis care for children and young people should be included as a key element in the development of these transformation plans. This is an opportunity to make further progress by working collaboratively to deliver the local commitments made through the Crisis Care Concordat.

#### Crisis care

The CQC report 'Right Here Right Now', published last month, sets fresh challenges for every service sector involved in providing crisis care. The report was accompanied by 12 regional inspection reports, for which CQC inspected services to concordat service standards. The reports are available at:

[www.cqc.org.uk/content/right-here-right-now-mental-health-crisis-care-review](http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/right-here-right-now-mental-health-crisis-care-review)

The report recognises the contribution that the Concordat work has already made, both nationally and locally, and argues that "If there is a reason to be confident then it may be found in the Crisis Care Concordat." It states that you have "a major role in making sure that pathways for crisis care provide the right care to people in crisis". I certainly endorse this view.

I therefore recommend that, as part of your continuous review of local action plans, you take account of the CQC's recommendations for local Crisis Care Concordat groups to:



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- ensure that pathways for crisis care are focused on providing accessible and available help, care and support for all those who require it at the time they need it;
- hold commissioners to account for commissioning crisis services that deliver a quality of care based on evidence-based good practice and that is in line with the Concordat key principles; and
- engage with local, regional and national partners to make sure those innovative approaches to improving the experiences of those in crisis are shared within, and across, local areas.

In addition to this, I suggest that your groups:

- Review, as a partnership, the patient experience aspect of crisis services; focusing in particular on the CQC's recommendation that "services need to improve how they listen, respect and provide compassionate responses to people in crisis". This should include the telephone support available.
- Include information in revised action plans about local governance arrangements. This will help your communities know that your plans are being taken forward, and how this is happening.
- Celebrate successes, and service improvements and innovations. Let the Department and Mind know, so that we can help you share best practice.

Please aim to update action plans by the end of October, and to include reports about the progress you have already made against your existing actions. Areas can send through updated plans directly to Mind who will manage the publication of them on the Concordat website. The email address for this is [Contact@crisiscareconcordat.org.uk](mailto:Contact@crisiscareconcordat.org.uk).

I very much look forward to working with you all on this vital agenda.

*Yours ever*  
*Alt RB*

**ALISTAIR BURT**