

Eliminating Out of Area Treatments – the canary in the mine

The issue

Professor Kendall: *“Ending this practice must be a priority for mental health providers”*

“Reducing inappropriate adult mental health out-of-area placements” is now part of NHS Improvement’s single oversight framework.

Our Solution

Across mental health services, we know that OATs are the “canary in the mine” of service performance. We have worked with over twenty local mental health economies supporting evidence based reductions in OATs.

We use our long clinical experience, and a simulation modelling approach and tool which we have developed specifically for mental health services.

We can:

- a) Undertake a detailed patient flow review of the processes of admission, inpatient management, and discharge.
- b) Assess support for local alternatives to admission: crisis cafes, sanctuaries, strengthened home treatment services, step-down services.
- c) Evaluate new arrangements with criminal justice services to divert demand arising from the police, via section 136 arrangements, street triage or control room-based mental health staff.
- d) Help determine the root cause of each individual placement.
- e) Assess how improvements in acute hospital A&E’s can divert people to other forms of community care.
- f) Consider how community mental health services can focus and prioritise their work with people at periodic risk of severe mental health crises.

Your outcome

We deliver an evidence based platform, and plan, for substantial OATs improvements. We do this by providing you with a comprehensive model of the way your local system works now, and agreed options for change to eliminate OATs.

Following a project which was intended to help reduce OATs, Nicola Lees, Chief Executive, Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust, commented: *“The outcome of the project will enable us to further develop our longer term vision with local CCGs and the Local Authority, as well as other external partners. It has already helped us to consider the internal changes we might wish to implement in the future, as it has provided us with the necessary qualitative and quantitative data to be able to build a model which reflects our desire to progress swiftly yet safely in order to improve the quality of our services. All of the recommendations are being taken forward through our steering group and executive processes.”*

To discuss how we can help, please contact:



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