



# Modernising Mental Health Services

*Safe, sound and supportive*

# Foreword by the Secretary of State

Mental illness is as common as asthma - it affects about one in six adults at any one time. It ranges from high levels of anxiety or deep depression to severe illnesses like schizophrenia which affect fewer than one person in a hundred. It isn't well understood, people are frightened of it and it carries a stigma which adds to the burden of the illness itself.

Partly as a result of this, mental illness doesn't get the attention it deserves, the standard of care is varied, from the excellent to the non-existent, and the legal framework is decades out of date.

As part of our programme to create modern and dependable health and social services we are preparing radical changes to improve the treatment of mental illness so it provides a system in which patients, carers and the public are safe and where security and support is provided to all who need it.

To bring this about we propose 24 hour crisis teams to respond to emergencies, more acute mental health beds, more hostels and supported accommodation, more home treatment teams, more training for all involved in dealing with patients who are mentally ill and access to NHS Direct for 24 hour help and advice.

Our proposals for a National Institute for Clinical Excellence will ensure that clear and authoritative guidance is available on the most effective drugs and therapies. We are also developing a National Service Framework for mental health to spell out how to provide top quality local services which meet national standards.

Care in the community has failed because, while it improved the treatment of many people who were mentally ill, it left far too many walking the streets, often at risk to themselves and a nuisance to others. A small but significant minority have been a threat to others or themselves.

We are going to bring the laws on mental health up-to-date. In particular to ensure that patients who might otherwise be a danger to themselves and others are no longer allowed to refuse to comply with the treatment they need. We will also be changing the law to permit the detention of a small group of people who have not committed a crime but whose untreatable psychiatric disorder makes them dangerous. The law will be



changed to deliver this protection for the public while at the same time respecting the civil rights of patients.

All these measures and many more in this document should help make sure that in future patients, service users, carers, and the public get a better deal from the mental health system. To fund these improvements over the next three years we will find an extra £700 million for health and social services to invest in the better treatment and care of mental illness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Frank Dobson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'F' and 'D'.

Frank Dobson MP  
*Secretary of State for Health*

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	
<b>Foreword by the Secretary of State</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	
<b>1 Mental health</b>	<b>10</b>
Importance of good mental health	
Stigma of mental illness	
Need for modernisation of mental health services	
<b>2 New vision</b>	<b>16</b>
Modernising health and social services	
Safe, sound and supportive mental health services	
<b>3 The failures of the past</b>	<b>24</b>
Care in the community has failed	
Gaps in health and social services	
<b>4 Modernising mental health and social care</b>	<b>32</b>
Improving services	
Improving safety	
Involving patients, users and carers	
<b>5 Investing in reform</b>	<b>56</b>
Investment for reform	
Greater efficiency and value for money	
Planning the next steps	
<b>6 Conclusion</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>7 References</b>	<b>66</b>

# Executive summary

## **Mental health**

- Mental health problems are common. At any one time around 1 in 6 adults have a mental health problem such as anxiety or depression, although less than one per cent of the population suffers from severe mental illness. The stigma which attaches to mental ill health leads to discrimination and to social exclusion.
- Suicide is now the second most common cause of death in those under the age of 35 years. Although the rate has begun to decline, there are still over 4000 deaths from suicide in England each year. People with severe mental illness are at higher risk.
- There is a relationship between active mental illness and violence. The risk is significantly greater if the individual loses contact with services, or receives inadequate care. The public is understandably concerned about the risks of violence.

## **New vision**

- The Government's commitment to a modern, decent and inclusive society provides the context for our vision for mental health services. We are committed to working in new ways to tackle the problems of social exclusion.
- The Government has set out clear proposals to modernise the NHS and social services:
  - *The new NHS* spelt out the need for health services to tackle the root causes of ill health, ensure high standards of health care, and quicker treatment;
  - *Modernising Social Services* highlights three priorities for personal social services: promoting independence, improving protection, and raising standards.

And we want both the NHS and social services to work more in partnership to provide integrated services which will improve the quality of life for our people.

- Our new vision for mental health services for adults will mean safe, sound and supportive services for patients and users and we spell out here how we will translate this into action at local level. We are already taking action to improve mental health services for young people. The National Service Framework for Older People will consider the mental health needs of older people.
- This new vision will be supported by £700 million of new investment over three years, better treatment and care, and a modern framework of law. We will ensure this new investment is well spent by setting clear objectives, monitoring performance and by ensuring effectiveness and cost efficiency at every level.

### **Failures of the past**

Although with staff dedication and commitment, the policy of care in the community has benefited many, there have been too many failures.

Failure has been caused by:

- inadequate care, poor management of resources and underfunding;
- the proper range of services not always being available to provide the care and support people need;
- patients and service users not remaining in contact with services;
- families who have willingly played a part in providing care have been overburdened;
- problems in recruiting and retaining staff;
- an outdated legal framework which failed to support effective treatment outside hospital.

### **Modernising mental health and social care.**

- We will modernise mental health services by providing safe, sound and supportive services:
  - services should be safe, to protect the public and provide effective care for those with mental illness at the time they need it;
  - services should be sound, ensuring that patients and service users have access to the full range of services which they need;
  - services should be supportive, working with patients and service users, their families and carers to build healthier communities.

- Modern mental health services will assess individual needs, deliver better treatment and care whether at home or in hospital, enable 24 hour access to services, ensure public safety, and manage risk more effectively.
- Modern mental health services will have a firm base in primary care. Primary Care Groups will work closely with specialist teams to integrate service planning and delivery.
- Information systems will support the delivery of care and the management of resources, and there will be close partnerships with education, employment and housing.
- Patients, service users and carers will be involved in their own care, and in planning services.
- Services will be delivered in the most efficient and cost effective way with clear guidance from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence.
- Secure hospital services will be improved. Public protection will remain our first priority at all times.

### **Investment for reform**

- Reform will be underpinned by substantial new investment - £700m over 3 years. This new investment will be in return for reform and improvements in service delivery, efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- The new investment will provide extra beds of all kinds, better outreach services, better access to new anti-psychotic drugs, 24 hour crisis teams, more and better trained staff, regional commissioning teams for secure services, and development teams.
- Performance will be monitored through the new performance assessment frameworks for health and social care, complemented by external inspection through the Social Services Inspectorate, the Joint Reviews with the Audit Commission, and the new Commission for Health Improvement.
- A new mental health National Service Framework will determine service models and national standards. Action is being taken to improve services for children and adolescents. The mental health needs of older people will be considered in the National Service Framework for Older People which will be published in 2000.

## **Conclusion**

These changes will help us to make good the failings of the present system, improve the quality and consistency of services, and increase efficiency across the board. The NHS and social services will work more closely together and so provide proper integration of treatment and care. These reforms mark a new beginning for mental health provision in our country.

# Introduction

*Modernising Mental Health Services* sets out the Government's vision for safe, sound, and supportive mental health services for working age adults. Within the programme to modernise health and social services, it proposes radical reforms to improve mental health care and to build public confidence in mental health services.

Today's mental health services do not fulfil the highest expectations for everyone. There are inequities in access to services. Unacceptable variations in performance and practice continue. The legislative framework, designed when most mental health care was provided in institutions, no longer supports the delivery of care. And staff, despite their dedication and commitment, too often work under immense pressure.

People with mental health problems often have complex needs which cross traditional organisational boundaries. A modern mental health service will provide care which is integrated, and which is focused on the individual recognising that different people have different needs and preferences. It will be evidence-based, and outcome driven. Services will be there for people when they need them and where they need them.

Service development will be underpinned by strategies to recruit, lead and support the staff we need to work in mental health services; and information systems will be developed to improve practice and ensure the better management of resources. The new arrangements for commissioning will ensure that the implementation of national standards and service models is informed by local knowledge. The delivery of services will reflect the nature of individual communities - rural, market town, suburb or inner city.

*Modernising Mental Health Services* describes the vision, and sets out action which the Government has already taken. It also describes some specific service objectives for next year with proposals for immediate investment. Over the next three years we will be investing nearly £700m - investment for reform.

A National Service Framework for mental health will inform decisions about this investment. It is being developed with the help of Professor Graham Thornicroft and others with knowledge and experience from the

field, and will be published in the Spring. It will set out detailed service models and performance standards to address the mental health needs for adults of working age. Findings from the preliminary work to develop standards is presented here to help Health Authorities, Primary Care Groups, NHS Trusts and Local Authorities to prepare.

*Modernising Mental Health Services* concentrates on the needs of people of working age. Improving child and adolescent mental health is also a priority for health authorities in close collaboration with social services, education services and other agencies. National guidance and advice have been issued to health and social services, which will take account of local needs in developing a range of effective community-based services. Again there will be new investment in these services.

A National Service Framework for older people will be published in April 2000. This will encompass the mental and physical health and well being of older people - setting out service models and performance standards to guide local implementation. Emerging findings will be published next autumn.

This document outlines the way to achieve safe, sound and supportive mental health services in the future. This will be achieved through new investment and better management of resources; effective interventions and care programmes; changes in mental health legislation to support modern mental health services; and work in partnership between health and social services, and statutory, voluntary and independent agencies.

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**Footnote**

The terms mental illness, mental disorder and mental health problem are used throughout the document. This reflects the diversity of usage which exists in everyday life. The Government's intention is to focus upon all those of working age who have mental health and associated social care needs, whether or not they have other disabilities, or additional problems of a medical, social, or behavioural kind.