



Royal College of Nursing Response to the NHS in England consultation on the mental health clinically-led review of standards (NHS mental health access standards, 2021)

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. As the largest professional group implementing and delivering care within mental health services, it is vital that the voice of nursing is heard throughout consultation on
- 1.2. This response has been developed in collaboration with RCN members and staff. Particular critique of the standards was provided by the RCN mental health forum steering committee.
- 1.3. RCN members are acutely aware of the difficulties people face when accessing the right service at the right time. Improving access to mental health services is widely welcomed.
- 1.4. Concerns about the proposed plans to improve access have been raised. In particular the changes may unintendedly disadvantage certain people, while negatively impacting on an already stretched and burnout workforce.

## 2.

mental health policy, it also leads to increased resource use and economic burden.

- 2.3. We are concerned that the four hour waiting limit across all age groups does not specify that children and young people should be seen by specialist clinicians who are experienced in working with that age group. This has the potential to put children and young people at significant risk of receiving poor, nonevidence-based treatment pathways.
- 2.4. To improve patient transition between services, and reduce the pressure on hospital and community-based staff, community crisis services must move to a trusted assessment model. That is building trust between liaison services and secondary mental health.
- 2.5. Lack of trust between services may require staff training and governance review. If the access standards are to become reality, continuing with practices that delay the persons recovery journey

