

The Royal College of Nursing written evidence to the Public Bill Committee on the Policing and Crime Bill 2015 -16

Key summary

3. The RCN is clear that the government has a responsibility to ensure practices, resources and legislation recognise and respond to the needs of people suffering from a mental health crisis.

3.1 The RCN is calling for clear and defined lines of collaboration and communication between health and social care, police and prison services to enable the best outcomes for people in need of crisis support.

3.2 The RCN welcomes measures within the Bill to bring improvements to the Mental Health Act, however we are concerned that this ambition is not keeping pace with the capacity of local mental health services.

3.3 7KH 5 & 1 LV FOH DU WKDW SROLFH FHOOV DUH QRW VXLWDEO health condition, no matter what age, and should only be used in exceptional circumstances for adults.

3.4 While the RCN commends the government's commitment to parity of esteem between physical and mental health, it is highly concerning that there were 4,562 fewer mental health nurses in December 2015 than there were in September 2009¹. This marks a decrease of 11%. There has also been a 35% decline in the number of learning disability nurses over the same period, with a reduction of 1,922 learning disability nurses². We remain concerned about the impact on patient care due to cuts in the mental health and learning disability nursing workforce.

3.5 The RCN urges the Committee to consider the growing body of evidence highlighting the benefits of new ways of working between nursing staff, police and prison officers and to reflect on the potential to fund interagency initiatives through shared budgets between health and social care, police and prison services.

3.6 The RCN believes there is a strong case for delivering a health based response to someone experiencing a mental health crisis. The Bill should consider introducing an enforcement mechanism to ensure that the Criteria for assessing the treatment of and conditions for detainees in police custody³ is adhered to as part of HM Inspectorate of Prisons and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary work. This would ensure the appropriate services are in place to support someone experiencing a mental health crisis during their detention.

3.7 The RCN is also calling for the Government to consider the introduction of custom built custody suites within police stations, staffed with police liaison nurses, to provide a secure place for people in need of mental health crisis clinical support.

Collaboration between services

4. The RCN welcomes greater collaboration between police officers and mental health professionals to support people in mental health crisis, and there is now a growing body of evidence to show the benefits of such arrangements.

¹ Health and Social Care Information Centre, NHS Hospital & Community Health Service (HCHS) monthly workforce statistics - Provisional Statistics, December 2015

² Health and Social Care Information Centre, NHS Hospital & Community Health Service (HCHS) monthly workforce statistics - Provisional Statistics, December 2015

³ HM Inspectorate of Prisons and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, [Criteria for assessing the treatment of and conditions for detainees in police custody](#), April 2016

appropriate support for vulnerable younger people in the Bill is not matched with the capacity of the current system to deliver this.

6.1 A Health Select Committee report on child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) expressed serious concern about the availability of mental health services for \ R X Q J S H R S O H ⁵ V I D e t h e y w a i t . I n s o m e c a s e s F K L O G U H Q D Q G \ R X Q J S H R S O H ⁵ V I D e t h e y w a i t . I n s o m e c a s e s P S U R P L V H they will need to wait at home, in other cases in a general paediatric ward, or even in some instances in an adult psychiatric ward or a police cell ⁵ While the RCN welcomes the g R Y H U Q P H Q W ⁵ V F R P P L W A M H S , w e a r e c o n c e r n e d t h a t t h e s p a c e o f change is not keeping up with the demand for services, particularly for vulnerable younger people experiencing a mental health crisis.

6.2 The RCN is concerned about the variation in service provision for crisis intervention teams for young people suffering from a mental health condition. Linked to improving these services, crisis teams could include and build on the role of a Named Nurse for Looked After Children. This role provides a safe and effective operational service, supporting Looked After Children and young people to reach their full potential by ensuring that there are systems in place to meet health the needs of children in care andeds 70.588(H)-

