

The Mental Health (Wales) Measure

Newsletter 1 - January 2012

During 2012 the **Mental Health (Wales) Measure** will come into force. A Measure is a piece of law made by the National Assembly for Wales.

The Mental Health Measure makes a number of important changes to the way people with mental health problems can access and receive services.

In North Wales the Health Board, GPs, local authorities and the voluntary sector are working together to make sure arrangements are in place to provide these new services. The Measure has implications for staff working across health and social care and we will issue a newsletter each month to help colleagues to learn about the

Measure, how it will affect them and any action they need to take to be ready for their implementation.

In this first issue we provide a brief explanation of the Measure and the project arrangements in place to implement its requirements in North Wales. Future issues will provide more detailed focus on specific elements of the Measure and report progress on implementation.

Further information on the Measure, local implications and progress on implementation can be found on the Health Board's website at www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/861/page/58653

Introduction to the Mental Health (Wales) Measure

Current mental health law is set out in the Mental Health Act 1983. This provides a framework for the compulsory hospitalisation and treatment of certain people with a mental disorder. However, only a very small minority of people with mental health problems need this compulsory treatment. The great majority of people with mental health problems seek treatment on a voluntary basis.

The new Measure deals with accessing and receiving care and treatment within primary and secondary mental health services. It will apply to everyone, of all ages, receiving care and treatment within these services in Wales on a voluntary basis; compulsory admission, treatment and advocacy remain as matters for the Mental Health Act.

The four broad intentions of the Measure are:

1. To provide assessment of a person's mental health and, where appropriate, provide treatment for their mental ill-health within primary care. The Measure places a statutory duty on Health Boards and Local Authorities to develop and deliver local **primary mental health support services** across Wales.
2. To improve the effectiveness and coordination of mental health services by creating statutory requirements regarding **care and treatment planning and care coordination**.
3. To require secondary mental health services to have arrangements in place to enable people they have discharged to **refer themselves directly back to the service** if they believe their mental health is deteriorating significantly, without having to first go to their GP or elsewhere for a referral.
4. To **extend the provision of Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) support**, which is currently only required for patients subject to the longer-term sections of the Mental Health Act, to be available to the majority of patients detained under the Act and those who are admitted to hospital on a voluntary basis.

Start Dates for the Measure

There are a number of key dates throughout 2012 when each of these elements need to be in place:

January - Advocacy Services to be available to the majority of patients subject to the Mental Health Act

April - Advocacy Services to be available to all voluntary (informal) inpatients

June - Assessment, Care & Treatment planning and care coordination within secondary mental health services, including arrangements for direct self-referral for former patients

October - Local Primary Mental Health Support Services

Implementation Arrangements

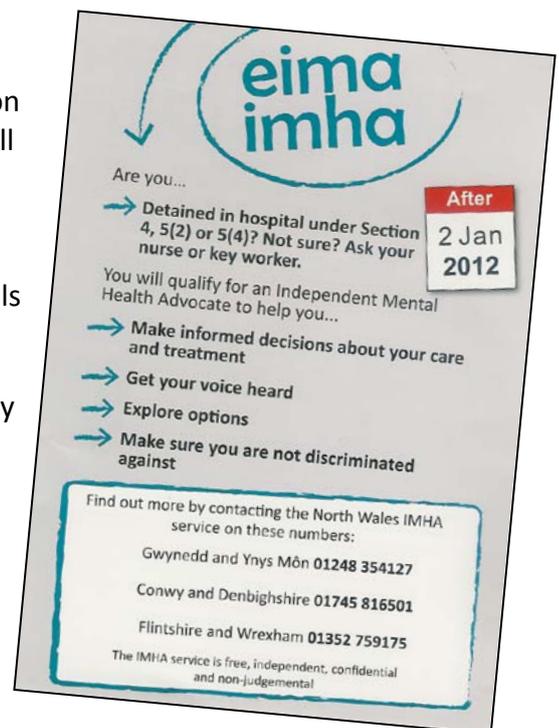
A Project Board has been set up to oversee the implementation of the Measure in North Wales, chaired by the Health Board's Director of Primary Care, Community and Mental Health Services. This includes representatives from the Clinical Programme Groups, General Practice, Local Authorities and the voluntary sector as well as service user and carer representation.

Three project implementation groups are taking forward the detailed planning and implementation, one looking at advocacy arrangements, one looking at primary care support, care planning and co-ordination and re-referral arrangements for children and young people and one looking at these same areas for adults.

Focus on Advocacy

The first part of the Measure to be implemented is the extension of the Independent Mental Health Advocacy Scheme to cover all individuals detained under sections of the Mental Health Act (specifically to include sections 4, 5(2) and 5(4)). The second phase of this, due in April, further expands the scheme to provide access to advocacy for all informal inpatients in hospitals or registered establishments in Wales.

At the moment the independent advocacy service is provided by the North Wales Independent Mental Health Advocacy Partnership. They have been commissioned to provide the extended services, initially until March 2013. The cost of this is being met from additional resources provided by the Welsh Government. The Partnership have recruited and trained additional advocates, including specialists to work with children and young people, to deliver this expanded service. They have produced a range of publicity materials to raise awareness of the extended service.



Contact Information

Further information about the Measure and local implementation can be found on our web-site at www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/861/page/58653

Alternatively please contact Wyn Thomas, Assistant Director - Community Partnership Development: e-mail to wyn.thomas@wales.nhs.uk

or write to Mr W Thomas, Matthew House, Unit 35 Llys Edmund Prys, St Asaph Business Park, St Asaph Clwyd LL17 0JA