

Dear Colleague

FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH DEFINITION

Background

In March 2019, the Minister for Mental Health commissioned an Independent Review into the Delivery of Forensic Mental Health Services chaired by Derek Barron, Director of Care at Erskine (the Barron Review). The final report was published February 2021 and made 67 recommendations to improve quality and delivery of Forensic Mental Health Services.

Recommendation 2 asks:

The definition and purpose of 'forensic mental health services' should be reviewed by the Scottish Government at a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency level to help inform the establishment of the new Forensic Board.

Summary

A Short Life Working Group was set up to explore options for governance, strategic change and increased partnership working across the forensic mental health landscape. The Group was tasked to review the definition of Forensic Mental Health Services.

As noted in the Barron Review, a clear remit is necessary to establish the boundaries between forensic and general mental health services, and forensic mental health services and criminal justice services. The Group were mindful of the range of interpretations of the term "forensic mental health" and worked together to agree the following as a working definition to support the option appraisal process:

DL (2023) 27
16 October 2023

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards

For information

NHS Chief Operating Officers
IJB Chief Officers
Chief Executive Assistants, NHS
Boards
Mental Welfare Commission
Forensic Network
Mental Health Tribunal Scotland
SG Mental Health Directorate
Dr Gavin Reid PMO, Mental Health
Directorate
Dr Callum MacCall, PMO, Mental
Health Directorate

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Forensic Mental Health Working Definition

“Forensic mental health services provide person-centred, safe and effective assessment; care and treatment; for persons with severe and disabling mental health disorders* who pose a risk of harm to others; and who have come to the attention of the criminal justice system (or whose behaviour poses a risk of such contact); in conditions of therapeutic safety and security in hospital (high, medium or low), or in the community and in criminal justice custody.”

**as defined in the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, whether or not they are, or may be, managed under its provision.*

Action

This definition should be used going forward as the working definition for Forensic Mental Health Services.

Please cascade this information as appropriate within your organisation.

Kind regards



Gavin Gray
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Scottish Government Mental Health Directorate