



Executive Summary

of

MENTAL HEALTH OUT OF HOURS: HAVE YOUR SAY The Report

**Research conducted by the Local Involvement
Network in Cornwall (LINK in Cornwall) Mental Health
Out of Hours Task Group**

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Summary

- LINK in Cornwall heard concerns about the current provision of mental health out of hours and crisis support. Listening to this, and after assessing the situation both locally and nationally, LINK wanted to gather people's views and experiences of out of hours support services.
- LINK wanted to find out who people would contact, out of hours, if they experienced mental or emotional distress and what the people of Cornwall would like from an out of hours service. As 1 in 4 people will experience mental health issues at some point in their life, LINK wanted to ask individuals that had or had not used mental health out of hours services. LINK distributed questionnaires and ran a focus group. These responses form the basis of the Mental Health Out of Hours: Have Your Say report.
- As a whole, participants would contact the Home Treatment Team, the Samaritans and Nightlink. Participants who were Service Users would contact the Home Treatment Team and Non Service User participants would not know who to contact or would contact the Samaritans.
- In general people would like (i) a service that gave help and appropriate advice to resolve issues, (ii) the current service to have increased staffing (iii) the existing services to continue and one standard phone line. Service User participants would like a service offering help and appropriate advice to resolve issues and would like to see increased staffing of current services. Non Service Users participants would like to see better publicising of current services and would like one standard phone line.
- To conclude, LINK found that providers must ensure that a consistent and resourced service is provided by trained staff who help individuals deal with the crises they are experiencing and ensure the public know which services to contact and under what circumstances. The findings of this report will be fed into the Primary Care Trust Mental Health Commissioning Strategy and New Horizons consultation.

Recommendations

Immediate:

- Current staff to be praised for the service they provide.
- Increase publicising of information on mental health out of hours support and clear descriptions of the role of each service – (i) Mental Health Crisis Services leaflet distributed widely. (ii) Mental health out of hours number added to GP answer phones. (iii) CornwallMentalHealth.com website publicised and to include 'chat to a professional' facility.
- Clarification of role of each service for staff, service users and professionals.
- Home Treatment Team office to be staffed by two people at any one time.

- All staff to ask the caller if they would like to be called back.
- The review of Day Care Services to include providing more community evening and weekend activities in existing locations.
- Joint meetings to regularly occur between all organisations involved in providing out of hours mental health care i) to ensure consistent and continuous communication, ii) to keep everyone up to date and iii) to guarantee the service is regularly reviewed.

Near Future:

- Review staffing of current services by studying timing trends of calls.
- Renew training for staff. Renewal to include service users, carers and their representative in training. Skill workers in (i) answering the telephone, (ii) dealing with people with dementia, (iii) engaging with members of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people, (iv) ensuring confidentiality, (v) challenging current attitudes and culture (vi) implementing non reactionary techniques, (vii) signposting to existing services and (viii) dealing with frequent callers.
- Alternative ways to contact out of hours services (email or text) to be provided.
- Expert by Experience Panel to look at feasibility of peer to peer support network.
- Introduce virtual face to face meetings via webcam (either in people's homes or in booths at One Stop Shops).

Long Term:

- One standard phone line for 'health' out of hours which is either freephone or local number and is answered by trained staff offering to call individuals back.
- Voluntary organisations and publically funded community services to provide more evening and weekend activities and groups.
- Periodical internal review of the help and advice given to each caller to look at satisfaction with service provided. Look at this for different mental health classifications.
- Look at extending Nightlink to offer listening and advice during extended hours or if satisfaction is not increased the feasibility of setting up new line for advice 24/7.

On Going:

- Current system of giving out of hours contact details to service users to continue.
- Ensure high quality day to day support is provided. All support to be holistic and to equip a person with a crisis management plan to help them cope out of hours.



For more information or to get a copy of the full report please get in touch.

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