

Birmingham City Council

Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date 24th January 2023



Subject: Adults and Children and Young Peoples Mental Health
Report of: John Williams Director – Adult Social Care (Operational and Community Services)
Report author: Joanne Lowe Head of Service Operations and Partnerships Mental Health

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To outline the Role of the Approved Mental Health Professional – those authorised to make certain legal decisions and applications under the Mental Health Act 1983.
- 1.2 To detail the number of Mental Health Act Assessments per month 2019/2022
- 1.3 To detail the average time from request to completion of Mental Health Act Assessment
- 1.4 To provide detail on under 18's (Children) and Separately Adults over the same period

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 N/A

3 Role of the Approved Mental Health Professional

- 3.1 The role of Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) in the United Kingdom was created in the 2007 amendment of the Mental Health Act 1983 to replace the role of Approved Social Worker. The role of the Approved Mental Health Professionals is to coordinate the assessment of individuals who are being considered for detention under the Mental Health Act 1983. The reason why some specialist mental health professionals are eligible to undertake this role is broadly to avoid excessive medicalisation of the assessment and treatment for individuals living with a mental disorder, as defined by section 1 of the Mental Health Act 1983. It is the role of the Approved Mental Health Professional to decide, founded on the medical recommendations of doctors (or a doctor for the

purpose of section 4 of the Act), whether a person should be detained under the Mental Health Act 1983.

- 3.2 Assessment and detention under the Act is colloquially known as being 'sectioned', or 'sectioning', in reference to the application of sections of the Mental Health Act relevant to this process. The role to apply for the 'section' remains with the Approved Mental Health Professional, not the medical doctor, it is the Approved Mental Health Professional who is the individual who will decide if this is required after detailed assessment and consultations with the medical doctors.
- 3.3 Approved Mental Health Professionals are responsible for organising, co-ordinating and contributing to Mental Health Act assessments. It is the Approved Mental Health Professional's duty, when two medical recommendations have been made, to decide whether or not to make an application to a named hospital for the detention of the person who has been assessed.
- 3.4 To be detained under the Mental Health Act individuals need to have a mental disorder, the nature or degree of which warrants detention in hospital on the grounds of their health and/or the risk they present to themselves and/or the risk they present to others.
- 3.5 The Approved Mental Health Professional's role includes arranging for the assessment of the person concerned by two medical practitioners who must be independent of each other and at least one of whom should be a specialist in mental health, called being 'section 12 approved' under section 12 of the Mental Health Act 1983. Preferably one of the medical assessors should have previous acquaintance with the person being assessed. Efforts should be made to seek less restrictive alternatives to detention if it is safe and appropriate to do so, such as using an individual's own support networks, in line with the principle of care in the least restrictive environment. Approved Mental Health Professionals are expected to take account of factors such as gender, culture, ethnicity, age, sexuality and disability in their assessments.
- 3.6 Birmingham City Council provides a dedicated Approved Mental Health Professional function 24 hours a day via its Mental Health Act HUB and Adults and Approved Mental Health Professionals Out of Hours Team. Birmingham City Council Approved Mental Health Professionals have a dual role as both assessing social workers and Approved Mental Health Professionals and 50% of their casework is Approved Mental Health Professional work. Birmingham City Council provides Approval for Approved Mental Health Professionals directly employed by Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust.
- 3.7 Birmingham City Council currently Approves 62 Approved Mental Health Professionals of which 28 are externally employed or agency staff and we operate with an average of 10 Approved Mental Health Professionals on duty per day in the daytime, 2-3 at night and 5-6 per weekend/Bank Holiday. We have no Approved Mental Health Professionals who are employed by Birmingham Childrens Trust.

4 Mental Health Act Assessment Data

Age
Under.18

Month	Assessments completed	Median Days
Apr-19	16	1.0
May-19	20	1.0
Jun-19	12	1.0
Jul-19	17	1.0
Aug-19	18	1.0
Sep-19	13	1.0
Oct-19	7	1.0
Nov-19	14	1.0
Dec-19	8	4.5
Jan-20	9	1.0
Feb-20	9	0.0
Mar-20	13	1.0
Total	156	1.0
Apr-20	16	1.0
May-20	17	1.0
Jun-20	8	3.0
Jul-20	12	0.0
Aug-20	8	0.0
Sep-20	18	1.0
Oct-20	17	1.0
Nov-20	14	0.0
Dec-20	25	1.0
Jan-21	21	1.0
Feb-21	13	1.0
Mar-21	14	1.0
Total	183	1.0
Apr-21	17	1.0
May-21	12	1.0
Jun-21	23	0.0
Jul-21	11	1.0
Aug-21	7	1.0
Sep-21	11	2.0
Oct-21	13	1.0
Nov-21	14	1.0
Dec-21	9	1.0
Jan-22	8	0.5
Feb-22	18	1.0
Mar-22	15	1.5
Total	158	1.0

Age
18 plus

Month	Assessments completed	Median Days
Apr-19	361	1.0
May-19	345	1.0
Jun-19	308	1.0
Jul-19	381	1.0
Aug-19	359	1.0
Sep-19	319	1.0
Oct-19	371	0.0
Nov-19	305	1.0
Dec-19	338	0.0
Jan-20	369	1.0
Feb-20	319	1.0
Mar-20	326	1.0
Total	4101	1.0
Apr-20	287	1.0
May-20	351	1.0
Jun-20	365	1.0
Jul-20	361	1.0
Aug-20	340	1.0
Sep-20	343	1.0
Oct-20	311	1.0
Nov-20	295	0.0
Dec-20	318	1.0
Jan-21	327	1.0
Feb-21	338	1.0
Mar-21	363	1.0
Total	3999	1.0
Apr-21	323	1.0
May-21	337	1.0
Jun-21	336	1.0
Jul-21	330	1.0
Aug-21	353	1.0
Sep-21	308	1.0
Oct-21	342	1.0
Nov-21	320	1.0
Dec-21	340	1.0
Jan-22	320	1.0
Feb-22	426	2.0
Mar-22	309	1.0
Total	4044	1.0

5 Insights

- 5.1 The Mental Health Act HUB manages an average of 11 Mental Health Act Assessments per day and Out of Hours Adult/Approved Mental Health Professionals Service manages an average of 4 Mental Health Act Assessments per day. For under 18's we average 13 Mental Health Act Assessment requests per month.
- 5.2 The average time taken to respond to and complete a Mental Health Act Assessment is 24 hours however this does not mean that all assessment requests will lead to admission within 24 hours and this is particularly relevant with under 18s where NHS England hold sole responsibility for the allocation of Tier 4 beds (acute admission beds for under 17's). This is a national bed management provision and beds are often full across the country meaning a sometimes, significant wait of several weeks in extreme cases for a suitable bed to be found.
- 5.3 For the general adult population there are local bed management arrangements and some significant waiting times exceeding 2 months for a particular type of resource for example Older Adults or Psychiatric Intensive Care Beds. This can mean a person being subjected to multiple Mental Health Act Assessments and multiple Approved Mental Health Professionals being involved, putting a strain on our resources as we have to send an Approved Mental Health Professional out to complete the Mental Health Act Application form usually within 24 hours of the original assessment having been completed.
- 5.4 The above figures have remained consistently high for the past 5 years and Covid had a minimal impact on the level of Mental Health Act Assessments we complete in an average year.

6 Any Finance Implications

- 6.1 None

7 Any Legal Implications

- 7.1 None

8 Any Equalities Implications

- 8.1 None