



Joined Up Care
Derbyshire

Update from the **Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism** Delivery Board



Your e-newsletter

January 2025

The Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Delivery Board brings together partner organisations working across health and social care in Derby and Derbyshire. The Board is responsible, on behalf of Joined Up Care Derbyshire (JUCD), for overseeing system-wide delivery, performance improvement and transformation. The Board's aim is to collectively make improvements to outcomes for people with mental illness, learning disabilities and/or autism and to implement the requirements of the NHS Long Term Plan.

The Delivery Board met on 2 January 2025. This update shares key points of discussion from the meeting.

Chair's update

Professor Dean Howells, Chair of the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Delivery Board, opened the meeting by reflecting on a recent **ICB Board seminar** focused on mental health. The seminar, held just before Christmas, gave Derby and Derbyshire ICB Board members and provider colleagues the opportunity to consider local mental health services in a national context and to think about challenges and opportunities from a 'population health' perspective. The session was well received and there was particular acknowledgement of primary care's involvement in promoting and improving mental health, learning disabilities and autism services, which Dean relayed to GP colleagues at the Delivery Board meeting.

A brief update was also given on [NHS Talking Therapies](#), and the new contract that will come into effect on 1 July 2025. Dean explained that the ICB Board will receive a full overview of the bids submitted for the new contract at its meeting on 17 January, and will then confirm the new provider.

Dean also highlighted the recent **CQC inspection** of the acute mental health inpatient services at the Radbourne Unit in Derby and the Hartington Unit in Chesterfield. Although an inspection report has not been published at the time of writing, initial verbal feedback from the inspectors has been positive and confirms that improvements have been made since the previous visit in the spring of 2024. Dean congratulated colleagues from Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the partner agencies who have provided support.

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Neurodiversity assessment pathway for adults in Derbyshire

A report was presented to the Delivery Board giving an update on Derby and Derbyshire's adult neurodiversity assessment pathway.

Like many parts of the country, adults in Derby and Derbyshire currently have to wait a significant length of time for an autism and/or ADHD assessment due to demand for the service; demand for the service locally is higher than we would expect from national prevalence data. Until recently, the provider of ADHD and combined ADHD/autism assessments for Derby and Derbyshire residents was Sheffield Adult Autism and Neurodevelopmental Service (SAANs), part of Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust.

The SAANs contract has now come to an end, and work is underway to create a new service specification that is being co-produced by experts by experience. Some of the elements of the new specification are likely to include:

- A new, patient-led digital referral process with an in-built screening and prioritisation tool
- An initial screening process to ensure that there is a clinical need for assessment and that the patient has received signposting from the referrer for universally available help and support
- A prioritisation of the waiting list for assessments, on the basis of factors such as any immediate risk of harm, any court-directed requests, if a patient is identified as belonging to a [Core20+5](#) priority group or if a patient is unable to work or engage in education.

The other organisation commissioned to undertake adult autism assessments for Derby and Derbyshire residents is Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (DHCFT). The ICB and DHCFT are currently working together to explore the possibility of increasing DHCFT's capacity for these assessments. The aim is that this would reduce the current waiting times for adult autism assessments and allow DHCFT to take on the SAANs waiting list.

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Mental health response vehicle

The Delivery Board will receive a report at the February meeting about the new Derbyshire mental health response vehicle. This vehicle, which initially went live in October, is crewed with an East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) paramedic and a mental health clinician from Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

The vehicle is dispatched by EMAS to mental health-related incidents between 4pm and midnight, seven days a week. Mental health incidents are EMAS's fourth most common reason for on-the-scene attendance. Due to the complexities the ambulance crews are presented with, these can be challenging in terms of finding the right support at the right place and right time. By introducing a holistic approach between paramedics and mental health clinicians, it is hoped there will be a reduction in avoidable trips to emergency departments and care packages will be delivered more in line with patient needs.

So far, the results are promising: in 2023, 55.25% of the patients with a mental health need seen by EMAS were conveyed to hospital. In November 2024, following the launch of the mental health response vehicle, this figure had reduced to 12.28%. EMAS will be closely monitoring the impact of the service and we look forward to hearing their findings.

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Performance update

The Delivery Board reflected on this month's performance levels, noting:

- Continued strong performance in services including Early Intervention in Psychosis (two-week waits), CAMHS and Children's Eating Disorders (access and waiting times), Dementia (diagnosis rate), Community Mental Health (access number for adults and older adults with a severe mental illness) and Perinatal (access rate).
- Inappropriate out-of-area placements remain higher than the system target – this is mainly due to a rise in PICU placements, rather than adult acute placements, reflecting the acuity of need. On 19 December, Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board and Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust submitted a revised recovery action plan to NHS England (NHSE) and will be holding a summit at the end of January, supported by NHSE, to better understand the drivers for the increase in out-of-area placements and to strengthen the action plan. A local PICU (Kingfisher House) will open later this year.
- The number of long lengths of stay (over 60 days) in adult acute inpatient services is higher than the system target – though almost all of these are delayed discharges of patients who are clinically ready for discharge.
- The number of adults with a learning disability and/or autism in secure inpatient care is higher than the system target – though several step-downs are expected in the coming days.
- [LeDeR](#) completion rates (completing a report within six months of being notified of a death) need to improve – a report recently went to the system's Quality and Performance Committee on this issue, and a report will come to a future Delivery Board meeting looking at improvements and learning as a result of LeDeR.

The financial position around the system's mental health, learning disabilities and autism services was also discussed. The areas impacting on the financial position include urgent and emergency care and drug costs, as well as the non-delivery of efficiencies.

On the subject of finance, the Delivery Board welcomed the government's [commitment to the Mental Health Investment Standard](#).

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If you have any questions or comments on this bulletin, please email dhcft.communications@nhs.net

