

Health Scrutiny Committee
16 September 2021

Assessment, referrals and waiting lists for psychological support

Report of the Head of Legal and Governance

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's plans for managing access to psychological support, particularly in relation to step 4 psychotherapy and psychological therapies.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to identify if any further scrutiny is required and, if so, the focus and timescales.

3 Background information

- 3.1 In May, the Committee spoke to John Brewin, Chief Executive, and Julie Attfield, Director of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust about the review of the Trust's strategy, which was taking place at that time. During that session, the Committee heard that step 4 psychotherapy and psychological therapies had been particularly disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, as some therapies could not be delivered virtually, and this had resulted in patients commonly waiting in excess of six months for treatment. The Committee expressed concern about this length of waiting time. The Committee was informed that anyone waiting over six months for step 4 psychotherapy or psychological therapies would have a further review which would look at other options while they are waiting, for example online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) may be able to give some support while a patient is waiting. The Committee sought reassurance that support offered during a waiting period would not delay the referral for specialist psychological support nor result in an individual being removed from the waiting list because they are receiving some form of treatment before having opportunity to access specialist support.
- 3.2 The Trust informed the Committee that it was investing in capacity and other forms of support, for example social prescribing, to provide psychotherapy and was confident that the waiting list for step 4 psychotherapy and psychological therapies would be significantly reduced by end of the 2021/22 financial year.
- 3.3 The Committee requested that the Trust attend this meeting specifically to discuss the Trust's plans for managing access to psychological

support, particularly in relation to step 4 psychotherapy and psychological therapies. The Director of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities will be attending the meeting to give a presentation on the Trust's work in this area and answer any questions from the Committee. The Committee will want to use this information to consider whether it is satisfied with the action taking place to reduce waiting times and improve access or if further scrutiny is required, and if so the focus for that scrutiny.

4 List of attached information

4.1 None

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

6.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 May 2020

7 Wards affected

7.1 All

8 Contact information

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