

The Mental Health LCO, A Response

The application for the Mental Health LCO is to be welcomed if it results in high quality, client centred care for all of those in Wales who live with a mental health disorder. At present one of the biggest problems is access to assessment and then access to care, if this LCO enables the Assembly Government to overcome these problems which cause very real problems and pressure on acute services as conditions escalate in the absence of care then it will be of real benefit to Wales. Inconsideration of this the following points are made:

Point Three

While it is to be welcomed that a duty of assessment and treatment is to be placed on the Health Service it might be useful to expand the duty to one of referral to be placed on social services. Those with mental disorders access a range of services and this would ensure that they are directed towards assessment and treatment as fast as possible.

Point Five

The issue here is three fold; the definition of “mentally disordered” must not be used to narrowly so as to restrict who has access to advocacy services and there will need to be sufficient input of funds and sufficient training to make sure that high quality advocates are indeed available when they are needed. There will also need to be sufficient training to make sure that health service professionals are aware of the existence and the benefits of advocates so that they are used.

Point Seven

The definition of “mentally disordered persons” may well be appropriate; it is not condition specific so it should encompass the variety of mental health disorders that exist. The key will be how it is interpreted and it needs to be interpreted as widely as possible to ensure that the full range of those with mental health difficulties receive the help they need. It must not be restricted to the most severe conditions as a means of saving money.

Point Eight

It may be necessary to give some guidance on what is meant by “treatment” to ensure that it includes talking therapies and not just drugs therapies and in patient care. Treatment should have a wide definition so as to make sure that the full range of effective therapies is made available to all who may benefit from them. Treatment should also include regular access to mental health professionals, lack of which can often result in conditions escalating leading to pressure on overstretched acute services