

Briefing Note for Service Users concerning the reduction of the Mental Health Liaison Services at the Royal Free Hospital Hampstead

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To: CBUG & IBUG

The Royal Free currently commissions Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust to provide a day time (8am to 9pm) Mental Health Liaison Service at the Royal Free Hospital Hampstead. During the winter months of 2014/2015 and during winter 2015/2016 an augmented service was funded to provide night-time cover between 9pm and 8am. This involved additional Mental Health Liaison Nurses to work during night time hours as well as during the day. The funding for this additional service ended on 31 May 2016. The service will now revert back to 2014 arrangements i.e. an 8am to 9pm service only where a core trainee doctor is available to assess patients who are identified as requiring a mental health assessment.

It is hugely disappointing that it has not been possible to secure funding to maintain the night time mental health liaison service. However, we are absolutely committed to continue to work closely with our colleagues at the Royal Free to bridge the gap in service in the future. Discussions are ongoing to decide how they will replace the 9pm to 8am Mental Health Liaison Service at the Royal Free.

We are aware of the risks that are associated with reverting back to the 2014 model including the following:

- Service users attending the Royal Free Hospital with mental health needs or on Section 136 of the Mental Health Act between 9pm and 8am may experience long waits to see a mental health professional.
- Waits to be assessed by a mental health professional may be even longer for those service users who are not residents of Camden and Islington.
- The quality of experience for service users will deteriorate if they are subject to long waits for assessment.

We have issued guidelines to the staff and managers at the Royal Free Hospital about what to do during the hours of 9pm and 8am.

Camden & Islington will also work very closely with Royal Free colleagues to monitor the impact that this change will have on the quality of experience for service users.