



Centre for
Mental Health



Mental Health
Foundation

Ian Cumming
Health Education England
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6 June 2018

Dear Ian,

Mental health now accounts for 40 per cent of all GP appointments. However, we know that too often people do not receive the level of care that GPs want to provide. When GPs receive sufficient training and support, they can deliver the best care for their patients within their communities, reducing the need for more intensive care at a later stage.

Unfortunately, GPs' initial academic training for mental health is sometimes limited. The current, three-year GP training programme is too short, and as a result only one module out of 21 compulsory clinical modules for GP Speciality Trainees is specifically dedicated to mental health. A recent Mind survey of 1,066 GPs found that:

- Fewer than half (46 per cent) of all trainee GPs in England and Wales have the opportunity for an 'on the job' training placement in mental health before qualifying;
- 4 in 5 GPs would welcome training in a wider variety of mental health settings;
- 2 in 3 GPs feel that the proportion of their patients who require support with their mental health has increased in the last 12 months.

When trainee GPs undertake a post in mental health as part of their training rotation, this is generally focussed on secondary care psychiatry. Though this may include community psychiatric services, it is often based in hospitals. While a rotation in a hospital setting is undoubtedly useful, it provides a narrow experience of supporting people with their mental health.

Today, 90 per cent of people with mental health problems are supported solely within primary care services and there are other settings, such as local IAPT, community CAMHS and third sector services, where a huge number of patients will receive treatment. In the Mind survey of GPs, a vast majority (84 per cent) agreed that it would be helpful to expand mental health rotation options to a wider variety of settings and we are calling for HEE to make the facilitation of a wider range of placements a national priority.

General Practice is currently the shortest specialty training programme and we believe that the demands and increasing complexity of modern day general practice necessitate its extension to incorporate a fourth year. This extension would allow GP trainees to focus more of their time on mental health, including child health, reflecting the changing GP

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We're Mind, the mental health charity. We're here to make sure anyone with a mental health problem has somewhere to turn for advice and support.
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caseload and the increasing number of patients who are presenting with mental health issues. We propose this extension is achieved through a phased introduction of extended training over several years, to mitigate initial resource impact.

Further, current workforce proposals do not adequately address the shortfall in training and the need to improve workforce capability in primary care, and in particular, mental health.

As well as addressing GP and primary care staff training, we are calling for urgent additional resource in the primary care workforce, including the placement of mental health therapists in GP surgeries, as outlined in the GP Forward View and Five Year Forward View for Mental Health, as part of a wider body of work to address resource issues in primary care. This will be crucial to the success of services in the future.

As organisations with a deep interest in this issue, we would welcome the opportunity to further discuss Health Education England's plans in this area through a joint meeting, and hope this will be a priority for you going forward. Please contact Emily Waller by phoning 020 8215 2411 or by emailing e.waller@mind.org.uk.

We hope that by working together on this, we can take a step forward in improving mental health primary care services for both patients and the health professionals providing their care.

With best wishes,

Paul Farmer, CEO,
Mind

Dr Richard Vautrey, Chair,
BMA General Practitioners
Committee

Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard,
Chair, Royal College of General
Practitioners

Mark Winstanley, CEO,
Rethink Mental Illness

Sean Duggan, CEO,
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Isabella Goldie
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Sarah Hughes, CEO,
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Professor Wendy Burn, President,
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