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NHS and governance innovators join forces to support health service leaders with looming mental health crisis

Good Governance Institute and Connect Health launch important guidance at a virtual roundtable

Amid rising pressure on the UK's mental health services, compounded by COVID-19, the Good Governance Institute (GGI) and Connect Health have unveiled an industry-leading briefing to support NHS leaders and commissioners in providing the most efficient and best quality care in the community.

Launched at a virtual roundtable on Tuesday 8 September to senior healthcare leaders across the health system including Clinical Commissioning Groups and Trusts, the Board Assurance Prompt (BAP) supports the Government's ambitious Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme and the NHS Long Term Plan's proposal for a further 1.9million people to receive IAPT services by 2024.

Hinged around the six IAPT key principles, the report examines how challenges, including significant funding and workforce deficits, will be addressed. By exploring how IAPT services can be more fit for purpose, the BAP considers the better use of technology to boost efficiency, working within agreed financing and staff recruitment and retention parameters, all while ensuring inclusive access for all, particularly those from vulnerable and deprived backgrounds.

Included within the BAP is a checklist and maturity matrix to support NHS organisations understand whether they are delivering the most effective IAPT and mental health services. It features the best approaches to develop six elements – access, service user experience, people, finance, digital and Integration.

The six IAPT principles covered in the BAP are:

- Ease of access - including the use of self-referrals;
- Least intrusive intervention first - in line with NICE-recommended psychological therapies and a stepped-care model;
- Trained and competent clinicians - who have regular clinical supervision that is outcome-focused and supportive;
- Meaningful treatment choices;
- Routine, outcome monitoring - session by session; and,
- Building and maintaining close links with primary care, specialist mental health services, third sector, social care and employment support services.

Andrew Corbett-Nolan, Chief Executive of GGI, explains: "Many experts are warning that a mental health crisis is looming. We know that there is rising demand as a consequence of those who have experienced severe physical and mental health complications during the pandemic, and also the millions of others who had their treatment delayed and now need

physical and mental support on their journey to recovery. This demonstrates just how important high-quality IAPT services will be in the coming months.”

Graeme Wilkes, Chief Medical Officer, Connect Health adds: “Today, almost one in four people in the UK have a mental health condition and this is set to rise because of the pandemic. To help meet increased demand, while providing quality care within tight budgets and struggling with workforce deficits, commissioners, and providers of IAPT services are faced with serious challenges. Through the BAP we hope to offer workable solutions and advice, including help to those with long term health conditions such as musculoskeletal (MSK) disorders which overlap significantly with mental health problems. Particular emphasis is also focused on colleagues with no clinical background, who need support to understand key healthcare issues relating to the provision of IAPT.”

See the BAP here: www.good-governance.org.uk/services/improving-access-to-psychological-therapies-board-assurance-prompt

Ends

Notes to editors

About the event

- Over 30 NHS leaders joined a virtual conference, held on 8 September, chaired by Paul Devlin, Chair at Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.
- It featured guest speakers include Andrew Corbett-Nolan, CEO GGI, Graeme Wilkes, Chief Medical Officer at Connect Health, Doreen McCollin, NED at Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust and David Rogers, Chair at North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust.
- Reviewing physical and mental health integration ambitions and considering integration priorities such as employment and psychosocial support formed part of the roundtable’s agenda alongside exploring the BAP and its practical application and next steps for Boards and Governing Bodies.

About Connect Health

- For over 30 years Connect Health has been working in partnership with the NHS. Its roots are in the provision of national evidence-based, clinically-driven community musculoskeletal services, including orthopaedics, pain, rheumatology, physiotherapy and change management expertise, informed by its proven transformation and mobilisation model.
- Connect Health is a leading community services healthcare provider covering pain, MSK (musculoskeletal) conditions, IAPT, orthopaedics, rheumatology and occupational health physiotherapy services, serving over 350k NHS patients pa across 26 NHS partners and 100+ businesses. Connect effectively and efficiently delivers care in a lower-cost community setting, transforming services around specific quality and financial objectives, dramatically reducing waiting times and improving outcomes for patients. Connect has developed specialist expertise in sustained, transformational

change through its sophisticated infrastructure, digital tools, highly advanced clinical and operational dashboard and mobilisation methodology.

- For more information please visit www.connecthealth.co.uk/mental-health

About the GGI

- Identified by the Financial Times as one of the top 20 consultancies operating in the public sector, GGI brings a decade of experience working with leaders on the broad canvas of governance. Our reputation as thought-leaders working to review and develop Boards and Governing Bodies places GGI as a recognised partner across health, social care, education, local government, and the charitable and corporate sectors.
- GGI's value lies not only in our detailed understanding and expertise in relation to the challenges and opportunities faced by Board members, but also in our ability to bring issues of governance to life through delivering support in strategy, leadership, engagement, and organisational development.