

Brief summary: New Ways of Working for primary care mental health

This document aims to assist commissioners and providers in the redesign of primary care mental health services and roles, in the context of an NHS in transformation. The ongoing change provides opportunities for primary care mental health to develop roles and to change practice, two elements that are critical to the success of the whole 'primary care led commissioning' and 'care closer to home' agendas.

Lord Darzi's Next Stage Review describes the importance of an NHS that is "locally led, patient-centred and clinically driven". Published in July 2008, the document *NHS Next Stage Review: Our vision for primary and community care* set out the Department of Health's vision for primary and community care services, and launched a strategy to support patients, the public, clinicians and the local NHS to achieve continuous improvements in the quality of services.

"Primary care services should be shaped around individuals and listen to and respond to their needs. The system should feel connected and work for them. They should have convenient access to a growing range of health services in GP surgeries, in a range of other community settings and in their own homes. They can make more choices, including choosing their GP practice. People can take greater control over how they manage their care, particularly those with long-term conditions."

The work described in this report, although predating the Next Stage Review, anticipates and supports the implementation of this vision. Supporting clinical staff to be "practitioners, partners and leaders" and acknowledging that "healthcare is delivered by a team... clinicians, managerial staff and those in supporting roles. All members of the team are valued", has been the key focus of the work that has collectively been called New Ways of Working since 2003.

In this document a range of real examples that typify the values, characteristics and themes of primary care mental health are offered.

The report first re-examines the clinical typologies of people presenting to primary care practitioners, then looks at the critical values for primary care mental health. It outlines three themes, with examples of how excellent primary care mental health can be delivered through new roles and the changing of practice in the workforce.

The main substance of this document includes suggestions about how practitioners' roles might change, and includes practical guidance on how practitioners from primary and specialist care can effectively and safely work together towards improved outcomes for service users and carers.