

# Mental Health News

## Reducing waiting time in Accident and Emergency Departments

The Mental Health News e-bulletin is a daily bulletin issued by the Mental Health Improvement Programme (MHIP) containing an item relating to a Mental Health issue, development or outcome in the North West.

The aim is to bring awareness to our stakeholders about service improvement and innovative projects underway in Mental Health across the North West, and to encourage you (the reader) to act as vehicle for ensuring that you or your organisation is engaged with the work where applicable.

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The NHS Accident & Emergency waiting time target requires that at least 98% of all patients spend 4-hours or less in Accident and Emergency departments, this standard applies to mental health service users who attend these departments. The experience of long waits for mental health patients can delay assessment and treatment, and this undoubtedly can have an adverse impact on a service user's mental health.

The [NHS Next Stage Review](#) (Darzi, 2008) sets the agenda for NHS services to provide improved quality, safe, and personalised care. The recent work undertaken by Manchester Mental Health & Social Care Trust and their partner trust, Pennine Acute NHS Foundation Trust set out to develop greater efficiency and quality of service delivery to their mental health service users.

The two Trusts have initiated a review of the waits within the Accident and Emergency department and the partnership working between the organisations. As a result they have introduced changes to their working practices which include modifying the present assessment process, enhancing communications and introducing new ways of working for some of their staff.

Although this is an ongoing piece of work, the two Trusts have reduced average waiting times at North Manchester General hospital for those presenting at accident and emergency from 4hrs in June to 2.5hrs by the end of August. This reduction has been influenced by signposting to more appropriate services like Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment services and also by giving focussed attention on reducing attendance for service users known to mental health services who would have normally presented with mental health issues by giving them alternative responses.

The work is being lead by:  
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