

MEDIA RELEASE

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Lord Bradley visits liaison and diversion pilot in Leicester



* Lord Bradley (third from right) and Jenny Talbot (far right) at the Bradgate Mental Health Unit with (left to right) triage car officer Darren Birch, LPT mental health nurse and triage crew member Furqan Mia, Dr. Peter Miller, chief executive of LPT and Teresa Smith, director of adult mental health and learning disability services at LPT.

Lord Bradley of Withington visited Leicester yesterday (Thursday) to see at first hand pioneering work to improve the care of people with mental ill health who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

The Labour life peer, author of the Bradley Report – an independent national review of people with mental health problems or learning disabilities in the criminal justice system - was on a fact-finding visit with his Bradley Commission colleague Jenny Talbot, director of the Prison Reform Trust's Care Not Custody programme.

They spent Wednesday evening working a shift from Euston Street police station with police and mental health nursing specialists in Leicestershire's ground-breaking mental health triage car service.

The scheme, which was hailed by the Department of Health last year as an example of best practice, has paved the way for a new criminal liaison and diversion pilot, launched in April, which was main focus of Thursday's visit.

The pair praised the strong partnership working that has been strengthened through the schemes which see health and police colleagues working side by side to provide timely support for people with mental health, learning disabilities and other vulnerabilities.

In 2007 Lord Bradley was asked to lead a review of how more offenders with severe mental health problems could be diverted away from prison and into more appropriate settings.

His recommendations, published in the 2009 Bradley Report, included a call for criminal justice mental health teams to divert people with mental ill health in police stations and courts. This has helped to shape the 10 new national pilot schemes which could lead to a nationwide roll-out by 2017 if a full business case is approved by HM Treasury.

The one-year Leicestershire pilot launched in April to provide round-the-clock mental health nursing cover in police custody suites, and boost support in youth and adult courts, launched in Leicestershire.

Commissioned by NHS England, the all-age liaison and diversion service is a partnership between Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Leicestershire Police and the county's probation service.

It helps people with mental ill health, learning disabilities and substance misuse problems to get timely help to assess their condition when they come into contact with the criminal justice system, either in a police station, through the courts or in the community.

Just over a fifth of the 24,000 people a year dealt with in Leicestershire custody suites declare a mental health condition. The £450,000 Leicestershire project enables mental health practitioners to be available round the clock in police custody suites, with nursing staff based on site at Euston Street police station from 8am to 10pm and on call out of hours.

It also means increased specialist support for children and young people; people with learning disabilities, particularly autism, and older people with mental health issues – in particular those with dementia. It also introduces specialist mental healthcare support in Leicestershire youth courts.

Lord Bradley and Jenny Talbot met Chief Constable Simon Cole at Leicestershire Police HQ before travelling to the Bradgate Mental Health Unit, on the Glenfield Hospital site to meet LPT Chief Executive Dr Peter Miller and Teresa Smith, acting director for adult mental health and learning disability services at LPT and to hear more about the liaison and diversion service, which launched in April.

Lord Bradley then led two round-table discussions – the first a strategic overview with representatives from LPT, police, NHS England, local and national commissioners, the judiciary, probation service and other partners; the second a separate discussion with commissioners and the frontline staff who operate the service.

He wanted to hear what was working well with the scheme and what challenges needed to be overcome.

He told them: “The second wave of liaison and diversion pilots in the next financial year will give us 50% population coverage, with plans for a national mainstream roll-out by 2017, and we are anxious to maintain the momentum. We know that partnership working has always worked very well here in Leicestershire and Rutland.

“We are going from here to an event with the Home Secretary and will be able to tell her what fantastic work is going on here in Leicestershire.”

Peter Miller said: “We are proud of the progress we are making across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in providing real alternatives for people with mental health problems and learning disability, who come into contact with the criminal justice system.”

Kate Davies, OBE, Head of Health and Justice, Armed Forces and Public Health direct commissioning at NHS England said: “These services mark an achievement in providing better health care and support for those who need it the most. Whether it is a son, daughter, friend or neighbour, all vulnerable people in contact with police or courts will in future receive the same support and service wherever they are in England.

“The Leicester liaison and diversion scheme is an example of how the new model has started to make this change, and improvement of these services a reality, so that vulnerable people can receive the treatment and support that they desperately need.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Liaison and Diversion** (L&D) services operate by referring offenders who are identified with having mental health, learning disabilities, substance misuse or other vulnerabilities to an appropriate treatment or support service. In January 2014 the Department of Health announced an investment of £25 million for existing L&D provision and to test the service specification in 10 trial schemes during 2014/15 – Leicester, Merseyside, Dorset, Bristol, Sunderland and Middlesbrough, Coventry, London, South Essex, Wakefield and Sussex. The programme came about as a consequence of the Bradley Report. The programme has produced and developed the first national model for commissioning L&D services as well as working extensively with L&D service providers to build an active network. The 10 trial schemes are now commissioned by NHS England as of 1 April 2014.
2. Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides a range of health and wellbeing services mainly for people living Leicester, Leicestershire and. Trust serves a population of one million, has a budget in excess of £282 million and employs approximately 5,400 staff. For more information visit www.leicspart.nhs.uk For further information contact: Sheila Ashton, communications manager, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Tel: 0116 295 0042, E: sheila.ashton@leicspart.nhs.uk