Dear Colleague

SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE FOR DEAF PEOPLE

This letter is to inform NHS Boards about the establishment and launch of the first national specialist community mental health service for people with sensory impairment in Scotland, named the Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People.

This national service is launched on Friday 20 May 2011. The service is commissioned by National Services Division, NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) on behalf of all 14 NHS Boards in Scotland. NHS Lothian is the host NHS Board responsible for delivery of a Scotland-wide service.

While individual’s care, treatment and support will remain the responsibility of NHS Boards, the new service offers specialist advice to local mental health teams and specialist support in assessment and treatment. This support includes providing British Sign Language, technological resources, education packages and training for healthcare professionals – all available in order to help continue to improve communication and service responsiveness.

Background

The funding and development of this new national service was informed by a consensus for the need to significantly enhance the access to and the response of mental health services for people with sensory impairment in Scotland. The Scottish Government has made available £200,000 each year for the new service, which has been commissioned by National Services Scotland. More details of the new service are annexed to this letter, including flow charts for the service and for in-patient referrals to the specialist unit at The John Denmark Unit (JDU) in Manchester.

National Services Division NSS will continue to commission specialist in-patient mental health services for adults with sensory impairment on behalf of all NHS Boards in Scotland from the JDU. All referrals to the JDU (for specialist out-patient and access to in-patient services) will require to be via the new Scottish service from 20 May 2011.
Action

NHS Boards are asked to note this new national service and its role in providing specialist advice and assistance to local mental health teams; to note the patient pathway for accessing both the new service and for specialist in-patient services; and to bring this to the attention of all of those with an interest.

Yours sincerely

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Director of Health and Social Care Integration
ANNEX

1. Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People

1.1 This national service is launched on Friday 20 May 2011. The service is commissioned by National Services Division, NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) on behalf of all 14 NHS Boards in Scotland. NHS Lothian is the host NHS Board responsible for delivery of a Scotland-wide service.

1.2 While individual’s care, treatment and support will remain the responsibility of NHS Boards, the new service offers specialist advice to local mental health teams and specialist support in assessment and treatment. This support includes providing British Sign Language, technological resources, education packages and training for healthcare professionals – all available in order to help continue to improve communication and service responsiveness.

2. Background

2.1 The new service was established in response to a consensus on and a need for the development and improvement of service response for people with sensory impairment and mental health problems, as a key part of ensuring that Boards meet their legislative obligations on providing equality of access to NHS services in this service area. This matter has been subject to Parliamentary scrutiny and debate by the Scottish Parliament’s Health and Sport Committee from 2008 onwards following a petition submitted by the Scottish Council on Deafness to the Public Petitions Committee which sought the introduction of a specialist in-patient service in Scotland.

2.2 It is estimated that up to 40% of deaf and hard of hearing people experience a mental health problem at some time in their lives; and there is good evidence of a high degree of unmet need in this area because of the reluctance of people to present to services due to communications and access issues and due to perceived discrimination in mainstream services. The new service will be important in helping to improve an individual’s access to local community mental health services and in developing local services’ accessibility, responsiveness and the quality of their early interventions. It will also be important in building and improving the capacity and capability of local teams to respond efficiently in providing tailored care, treatment and support to this patient group; and in helping in the assessment on the level of unmet need in this service area.

3. The New Service.

3.1 The new service will provide advice on the management of deaf, deafened and deaf blind people with moderate to severe mental health problems; and specialist assessment (including in-patient assessment) and treatment in liaison with local teams, including providing British Sign Language and specialist technological resources. Individuals will remain the clinical responsibility of territorial boards.

3.2 In terms of patient reach, this is a general adult community-based service, which excludes children and adolescents, those with learning disabilities and older people with an organic disorder.

3.3 The service comprises a part-time consultant and 3 part-time advanced nurse practitioner nurses. The office base for this service is at St John’s Hospital, Livingston, West Lothian and it is envisaged that the outreach service will operate on a regional basis. The
new service will carry out a follow-up outreach function and a review of referrals for admission to specialist in-patient services at The John Denmark Unit (JDU).

3.4 In-patient admission assessments will be carried out by The Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People in conjunction with local mental health teams. The JDU will continue to provide specialist in-patient services.

3.5 There is an associated sensory impairment training package agreed with NHS Education Scotland in support of this new service and in support of local teams in developing and enhancing local service response. This training includes attention to specific issues for this patient group including their increased risk of mental health problems; cultural issues; communication issues; and challenges in accessing services.

3.6 Flow charts illustrating the patient pathway for the new service and for specialist in-patient referrals to the JDU follow below. As part of the Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People, urgent specialist advice will also be available, when required, during office hours.
Patient Pathway – The Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People

Patient

GP/Social Worker

Secondary Care

Refer to Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People

Appointment arranged at local clinic or in reach into inpatient unit if practical

Assessment by specialist clinician

Refer to John Denmark Unit

Advice/signposting/time limited treatment/follow up
Specialist In-patient Patient Pathway

Patient

→ GP/Social Worker

→ Secondary Care

→ Scottish Mental Health Service For Deaf People

→ Refer to John Denmark Unit

→ Admission to John Denmark Unit

→ Discharge with Comprehensive discharge summary

→ Video conferencing link to JDU team meeting

→ Local and Scottish services remain involved

→ Invite to pre-discharge CPA

→ CPA review including video conferencing