

A guide to our services for GP Commissioners



Mental Health Strategies is England's leading independent provider of advice and support about the commissioning and provision of mental health services. Established in 1992, we've worked with almost every NHS mental health service, and many independent sector providers as well as the Department of Health, the Home Office, and services beyond the UK.

This guide gives details of the range of services we offer to GP commissioners: these range from brief packages of intelligence-led advice, to longer-term partnerships to help bring about practical changes and improvements in local services.

Intelligence-led advice

In the short term, many GP Commissioners need simply to understand better the options available to them: how the quality and performance of local mental health services compare to those elsewhere; how things could be organised differently and better; how to actually go about changing things. This type of intelligence lies at the heart of the work we do. We bring together:

- The hard evidence of service quality and costs, with clear and detailed presentations of the strengths and weaknesses of local mental health services.
- Research-led understandings of what works in improving mental health care
- Invaluable softer evidence derived from our team's years of experience in the different ways mental health services can be provided

Our approach begins with working with you to understand the particular problems you are experiencing locally, and the particular aspirations you have for improvement. We then swiftly gather and present to you the intelligence which will best help you to address those concerns – as well as helping you to identify both problems and opportunities which might not otherwise have occurred to you. We will then offer you our intelligence-led advice as to the ways you can achieve the changes you seek.

Technical support

Some GP Commissioners, particularly those who have made mental health an early priority, have a very clear understanding of the improvements they seek in mental health services – but they are needing technical support to enable progress to be made rapidly and effectively. We have a wide range of specialist staff who can offer this. The technical support we offer includes:

- Design of tariff and incentive structures
- Procurement arrangements, including development of formal service specifications, contract structures, and performance management systems
- Clinical advice as to achieving safe governance of mental health care
- Design of premises for the provision of mental health services

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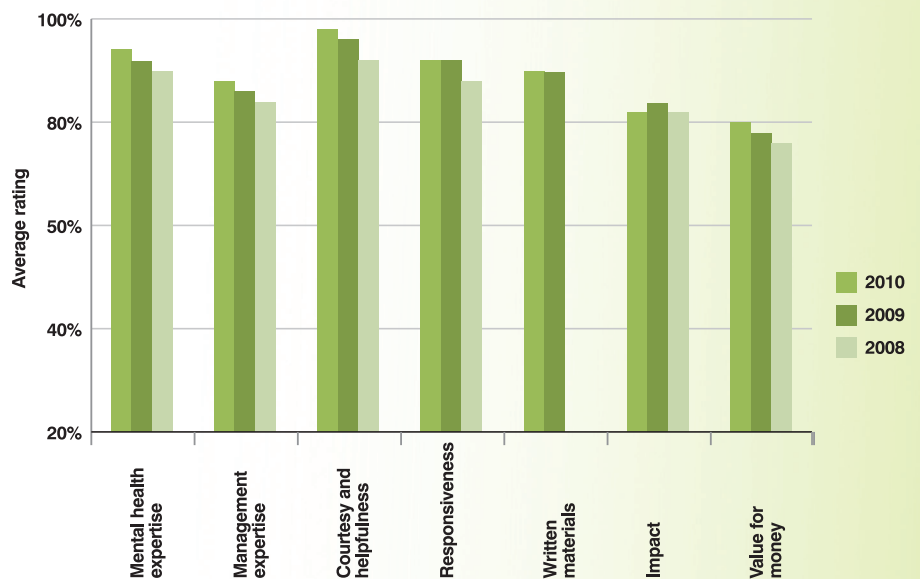
Our staff are experts in their respective fields: for example, members of our team have advised the Department of Health on the structure of standard mental health service contracts, and written national design standards for mental health care buildings.

Longer-term partnerships

Some GP Commissioners are beginning to consider longer-term strategic partnerships for commissioning support. This is a service we have provided to many Primary Care Trusts, and we are developing relationships with some GP Consortia to provide work of this nature. Within policy frameworks (and resource limits) set by the Commissioners, our responsibility is then to provide a full mental health commissioning support service: commissioning intelligence, strategic advice, procurement and monitoring of services, project management of change.

Our track record

Mental Health Strategies are specialists in what we do, with decades of clinical and management experience in mental health, and expertise derived from over 1000 commissions over almost 20 years. As an ISO 9001:2008 accredited company, we ask all our customers for formal feedback on the work we've done for them. We're very proud of the results. Over the past three years we've demonstrated not only consistent strong performance, but also continuing improvement. We're determined to maintain our record, so you can be sure of our attention to the quality of our work for you.



Our ambition

Perhaps most importantly, we are driven by our ambition to improve the quality of mental health services. We understand what needs to change: quicker access, simpler systems, better information, more holistic care. When money is tight, better value for money can come from streamlining assessment systems, greater utilisation of staff, and reducing reliance on expensive specialist services. There are opportunities everywhere to make these improvements, and we are eager to work with GP Commissioners to help to bring them about. We're keen to share what we're learning and developing in the emerging field of GP Commissioning, and we'd welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can help.

If you'd like to know more, please contact:

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