



# Looking at the Mental Health Act between 2024 and 2025

January 2026



Easy read version of 'Monitoring the Mental Health Act in 2024/25'

# About this booklet



We are the Care Quality Commission. We check services like hospitals and care homes to make sure they give good care to people.



We also check that health staff follow a law called the **Mental Health Act**. This law helps decide if a person with a serious mental illness needs to be kept and treated in a hospital.



This booklet looks at what we found out about the treatment of patients kept in hospital under the Mental Health Act in 2024 and 2025.

# What we did



We spoke to 3,642 patients and 717 family members and carers.



We also spoke to staff who were caring for these people in hospitals.



We want to say thank you to everyone we spoke with. Talking to them has helped us to do our job and learn about what care is like.

# The Mental Health Act



The government has agreed changes to the Mental Health Act to try to make it better for people with mental health needs.



We think the changes to the Act will help make sure people are more in control of their care and treatment.



These changes will happen over the next 10 years, and we will work with the government to change how we check mental health services.

## Difficulties in mental health services



More people are looking to get mental health support in England.



This means more hospital beds are being used and sometimes there are not enough.



It also means that people are waiting longer to find out if they need support under the Mental Health Act and their health can get worse.

## Mental health staff



Around 1 out of 10 jobs in mental health hospitals are not filled.



This means staff are feeling overworked.



Not having enough staff can also mean that patients feel unsafe and it takes more time for them to get better.

# Where patients are treated



Not enough hospital beds means that some people with mental health needs are being treated in places that are not best for them – like busy A&Es.



More than 5,000 people were kept and treated in hospitals that are far away from their homes. That is more than last year.



Some wards were clean and met people's needs, but others were noisy and unclean.

# What is people's care like?



Some staff are good at listening to patients, but we saw some care plans that did not look at each person's needs.



Services need to respect people's rights, but we are worried that some people are being kept in hospital without the protection of laws like the Mental Health Act.



Low numbers of staff mean that on some wards patients could not use areas like gardens, which could affect how quickly they got better.

## Are people treated fairly?

We are worried that care for people with mental health needs is different for some groups of people, like people who live in poorer areas and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.



For example, people from these groups are more likely to be kept in hospital under the Mental Health Act.



Mental health staff in 3 out of 4 services said they had not heard of a new scheme to make sure people from ethnic minority backgrounds get the same level of care.

## Autistic people and people with a learning disability



Lots of staff have had training on supporting autistic people and people with a learning disability.



However, some autistic people and people with a learning disability said they felt unsupported or that they were spoken to without respect.



We have also seen where autistic people and people with a learning disability have been treated in places that do not help them get well, or without the right equipment.

# Find out more



You can see the full version of our report on our website at:

[www.cqc.org.uk/mhareport](http://www.cqc.org.uk/mhareport).



If you want to give feedback on your care – it can be good or bad – find out how to get in touch with us at:

[www.cqc.org.uk/givefeedback](http://www.cqc.org.uk/givefeedback).



Or you can call us on:

**03000 61 61 61**