

## Royal College of Psychiatrists' Opening Statement

The Royal College of Psychiatrists welcomes the focus of this inquiry and would like to extend its sympathies to those personally affected.

The College works to secure the best outcomes for people with mental illness, intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders. We do so by promoting high quality mental health services, training clinicians, supporting research and setting standards.

Clearly, the care provided by the Trusts in Essex has fallen short of these standards on many occasions. We are participating so we can listen to the experiences of everyone involved, support work to ensure that good quality care is available to all and ensure an Inquiry such as this is never needed again.

The work of the College is shaped by lived experience, through clinical perspectives and those of patients and carers. It is how we have built our 'core standards' for service delivery, supporting our development and accreditation networks, it underpins our quality improvement approach and the recommendations we make when invited to review provider concerns.

In short, we know what good can look like, the barriers to delivering this and the steps providers and the mental health system can take to achieve high quality care. Those living with mental illness are some of the most vulnerable in society and we have a collective responsibility to ensure that they do not face a postcode lottery.

It should not be the case that the quality of care received depends on where someone lives; no one should worry about any aspect of their treatment when they need care or are in times of crisis.

Improving patient care, not only in Essex but across the country, will take more than a quick fix and cannot be achieved in isolation – a real step change will require cross-agency work at a local, regional, and national level.

We have previously voiced concerns about how recommendations from previous investigations or reviews have not been fully acted upon; we need to see better measures of accountability to guarantee progress, while ensuring providers have the resources and staff to be able to make the improvements required.

As RCPsych has a role in setting the standards in training and delivery of care, we look forward to working collaboratively with the Inquiry to shape and deliver the recommendations as appropriate, sharing our knowledge to ensure the safety of all.