Missing Patients

Request

(1) How do your community mental health teams (including crisis resolution teams and all others) react when a patient receiving their services in the community has been reported missing to the police?

(2) Under what circumstances, if any, would your community based mental health teams discharge a patient who was still missing?

(3) How do your community mental health teams react when a patient receiving their support in the community is found or returns home after being missing?

(4) Does your trust have written guidance (such as policies, procedures or guidance) about how community based mental health teams should proceed when a patient in the community goes missing or returns after being missing? If there is such guidance is it possible to send us a copy of it?

Our Response

Please find attached a copy of the Trust’s Absent without leave and missing patient policy.

In addition and in an effort to be helpful, our Community Mental Health Services Manager has provided the following explanation.

1) The Adult Community Mental Health Team response would depend on the circumstances and reasons for the report of a missing patient to the police. Usually it is the patient’s relatives who inform us of the missing patient and advice and support is offered to make a report to the police if this has not already occurred. The fact that a patient is missing is reported through the Trust incident reporting procedure.

2) If a patient remains missing for an extended period and therefore there is no active involvement from the Trust, then consideration would be given to closing the case. There are no Trust guidelines around this and the decision will depend on the individual circumstances of the patient and their disappearance.

3) As above, this would depend on the individual circumstances of the case and the patient's needs on their return. Their needs on their return would dictate the most appropriate service to become involved, i.e. Crisis, Inpatient or CMHT.