

# Mental health in prisons

Government does not know how many people in prison have a mental illness, how much it is spending on mental health in prisons or whether it is achieving its objectives.

## MENTAL HEALTH

"...a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential"

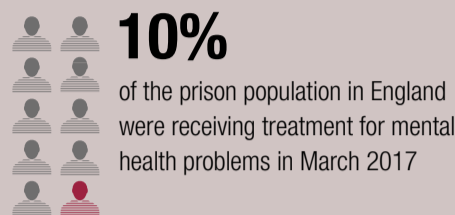
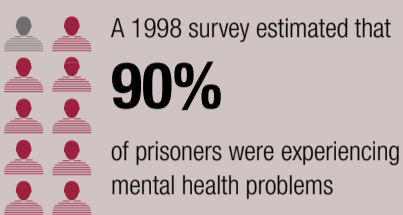
The World Health Organisation

Prisoners whose mental health needs are not addressed may be more likely to reoffend

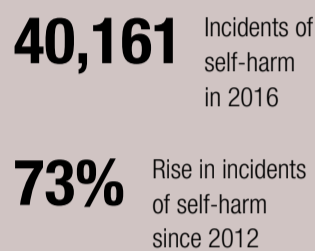
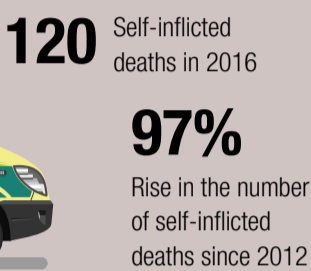


## THERE IS NO GOOD DATA ON THE PREVALENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN PRISON

Evidence suggests people in prison are more likely to have mental health problems than people in the community, but Government do not have good enough data to understand the level of need.



## BUT INCREASES IN SELF-INFLICTED DEATHS AND SELF-HARM SUGGEST MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF PEOPLE IN PRISON HAS DECLINED



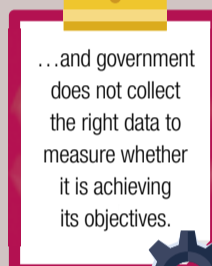
## GOVERNMENT HAS AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR IMPROVING PRISONERS' MENTAL HEALTH

HM Prison and Probation Service, NHS England, and Public Health England are jointly responsible for mental health in prisons, and have set ambitious objectives:



- An equivalent health and well-being service to that available to the general population.
- Improve health and well-being, tackle health inequalities and wider determinants of health and contribute to Protecting the public and reducing reoffending.
- Prisoners should expect to experience improvement in their health and well-being.
- Prisoners should expect continuity of care.

## BUT GOVERNMENT DOES NOT KNOW IF IT IS ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVES



## NHS ENGLAND DOES NOT KNOW HOW MUCH IT SPENDS ON MENTAL HEALTHCARE IN PRISONS

It is not possible to separate the cost of physical health services in prisons, from mental health services in prisons, because most contracts cover both.

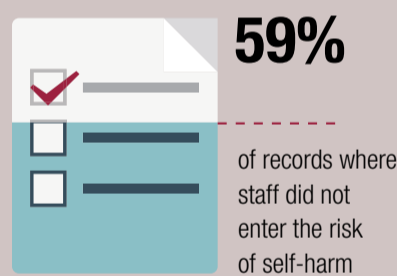
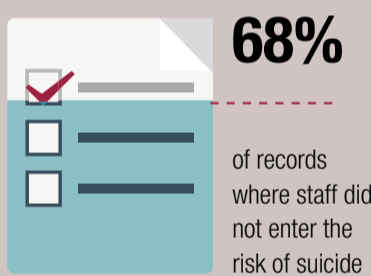
**£400 million**

is the estimated amount NHS England spent in 2016-17 providing mental and physical healthcare in adult prisons in England

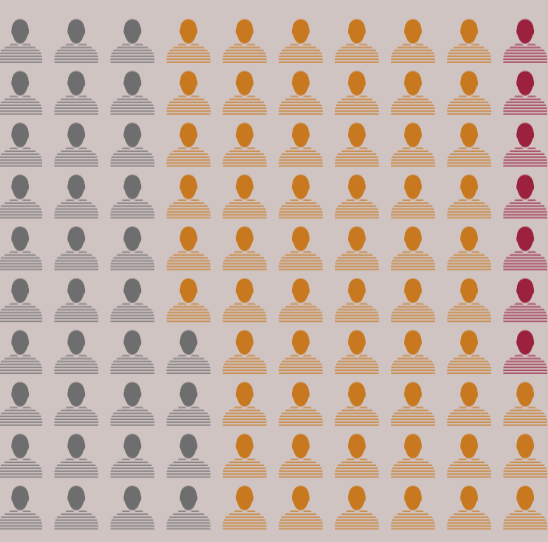
## THERE ARE WEAKNESSES IN THE SYSTEM FOR IDENTIFYING PRISONERS WHO NEED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Prison screening does not always identify risk of self-harm and suicide.

**Over 120** questions on the basic custody screening questionnaire



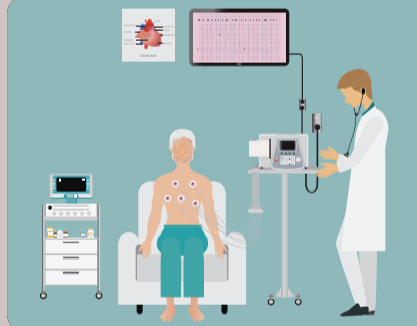
## PRISONERS WITH ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS WAIT TOO LONG TO MOVE FROM PRISON TO HOSPITAL



**34%** within 14 days

**59%** 15-140 days

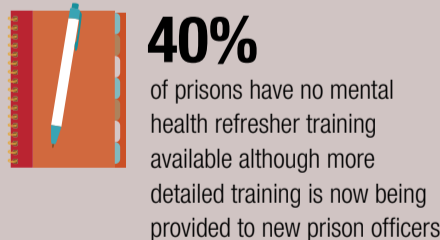
**7%** over 140 days



Health screening does not always pick up existing mental health needs.

Prison health staff do not have access to GP records. NHS England is in the process of linking prison health records to community GP records.

Prison officers have a responsibility to identify prisoners who may have mental health needs on the wing, but it is more difficult to notice changes in behaviour when they are under pressure.



## IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO PROVIDE CONTINUITY OF CARE BETWEEN PRISON AND THE COMMUNITY



When people are released from a prison a long way from their home, it can be more difficult to establish links with local health services.



Community rehabilitation companies, responsible for supporting and supervising most ex-prisoners, are not routinely told if an individual has mental health problems.



Remand prisoners are usually in custody for short or unpredictable periods of time, which makes it hard to plan for release.

## Recommendations

- The Ministry of Justice, HMPPS, the Department of Health and NHS England should improve their understanding of mental health needs in prison.
- The Ministry of Justice, HMPPS, NHS England and Public Health England should set measurable and achievable joint objectives, underpinned by an understanding of cost, and performance information that demonstrates whether they are meeting them.
- NHS England should ensure that contracts for mental health services are underpinned by appropriate performance management mechanisms.
- HMPPS and NHS England should ensure effective information sharing between health, prison and probation staff that takes account of the need for patient confidentiality and consent, as well as prisoner safety and the need to provide integrated support, within a prison and on release.
- The Ministry of Justice and NHS England should review the process for transferring prisoners to hospital.
- The Ministry of Justice, HMPPS, the Department of Health, NHS England and Public Health England need to address the rise in incidents of suicide and self-harm in prisons, as a matter of urgency.

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