Rethink Mental Illness response to Monitor statement on NHS funding

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Health regulator Monitor, which sets national prices for NHS services, has today announced it is postponing the introduction of a proposed 1.5% cut to mental health services in 2015/16, after an unprecedented response from commissioners and service providers.

Monitor made the decision after more than 51% of objected to the proposed Tariff, triggering a legal obligation to reconsider the proposals. While the consultation invited feedback from commissioners and health providers, Monitor also received an outcry from mental health activists, with over 6700 individual submissions being lodged.

In response to Monitor's announcement, Mark Winstanley, CEO of Rethink Mental Illness said:

"We're hoping that Monitor acts swiftly on the feedback it has received by making significant changes to its original plans.

"The proposed tariff recommended that mental health services should be subject to cuts of 1.5%. But this would push already overstretched services to breaking point, with disastrous consequences for people with mental illness. These services have always been chronically underfunded, and subjected to real terms cuts for the last three years running. We know the whole NHS, and A&E in particular, is under strain. But we can't forget that there was already a funding crisis in mental health services, and too many people are missing out on the treatment they need.

"Monitor's proposals have caused great concern among people affected by mental illness, and more than 6,700 Rethink Mental Illness supporters made direct submissions to Monitor's recent consultation.

"Now, while it continues to deliberate, local health commissioners have to make tough choices. We urge Monitor to give them a clear instruction to increase spending on mental health services and support, in line with NHS England's recent guidance.

"We also need local health commissioners to ensure that mental health services get a fair share of funding instead of being cut further, otherwise the NHS will continue to fail people with mental illness."

ENDS

For more information, or to set up an interview, please contact Brian Semple, News and Media Manager for Rethink Mental Illness on 020 7840 3043 or at brian.semple@rethink.org

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