



# MINIMISING AVOIDABLE HARM IN MENTAL HEALTH SOCIAL CARE: A CALL TO ACTION

Briefing, October 2024

## INTRODUCTION

Despite legal frameworks, professional standards and service regulation, people are still being avoidably harmed in mental health social care. While great work is undertaken in mental health social care, there is still room for improvement.

This co-produced call to action briefing is from a group of mental health social care experts. It presents a powerful and comprehensive approach to minimising avoidable harm in mental health social care. It is not a criticism but offers a set of shared actions for practical steps to improving support for people with mental health problems in all their diversity and complexity.

The expert group built on research by and with mental health service users: Avoidable Harm in Mental Health Social Care. You can access the project website [here](#).

You can download the full call to action report [here](#).

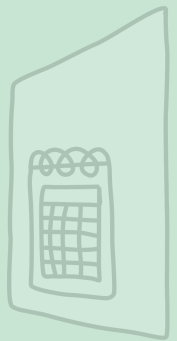
You can contact us [here](#).

# HARM MINIMISATION ACTIONS



1

**Restorative practice:** Establish restorative cultures driven by apology, accountability, transparency and collaboration. Restorative practice and justice are essential for creating safer and more supportive environments for both service users and practitioners alike.



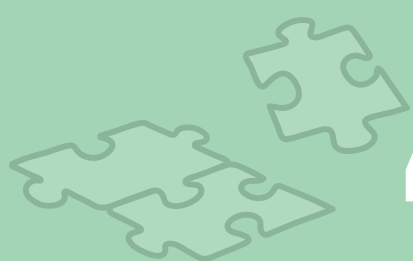
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**Improved assessment and care planning:** Person-centred approaches, co-production, transparency, cultural competence, and shared decision-making must be integral to all assessment and care planning processes.



3

**Better frontline practice:** A supportive, inclusive, and trauma-informed environment should be fostered, where the needs and voices of service users are central to frontline practice. This requires collaboration, ongoing learning, and a commitment to addressing systemic barriers.



4

**A co-produced set of practice principles:** Implement a set of principles including collaboration, empowerment, cultural sensitivity, continuous learning and accountability that are underpinned by service-user defined core values of honesty, openness, transparency, responsiveness, empathy and humanity. This requires a concerted effort and commitment from all stakeholders.



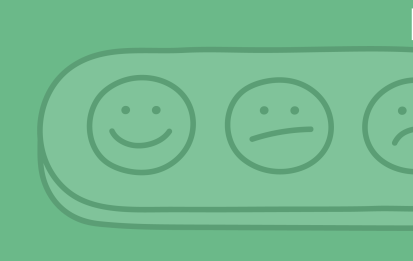
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**Improvements in practitioner recruitment, education and training:** Promote a comprehensive and inclusive approach to practitioner recruitment, education and training that prioritises service user involvement, co-production, values-based practice, and continuing professional development.



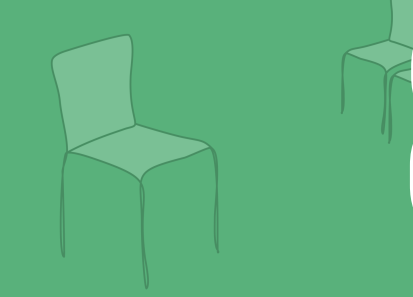
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**Better monitoring and regulation:** Commit to improving monitoring and regulation through greater transparency, service user involvement and collaboration across sectors while promoting the rights and well-being of service users.



7

**More accessible and responsive complaints processes:** Complaints processes must be accessible, transparent, responsive, and empowering for service users while promoting accountability, learning and change within mental health social care systems.



8

**Independent advocacy and user-led support:** User-led advocacy and support should be culturally competent, inclusive, and representative of diverse communities. Promote systemic change, provide comprehensive user-led support, and foster a culture of feedback and improvement.



9

**Enhanced understanding of risk:** Service perspectives and practices should better align with the needs, preferences, and rights of service users. Embracing holistic, anti-discriminatory, person-centred approaches to risk and safety management is essential for minimising harm and promoting autonomy.