

5 August 2004

Professor Louis Appleby

*National Director for Mental
Health in England*

Dear Colleague,

RE: Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide – Developing Positive Practice to Support the Safe and Therapeutic Management of Aggression and Violence in Mental Health Inpatient Settings

This guidance, and the standards it contains, have been formulated to support services in reviewing existing policies, education, training and practice on the management of aggression and violence training and personal safety. This is **interim** guidance, which will be reviewed once the *NICE Guidelines on the Short Term Management of Disturbed (Violent) Behaviours in Psychiatric Inpatient Settings*, is published later this year. It should be considered alongside the Acute Inpatient Care Policy Implementation Guidance and the existing best practice Standards for Psychiatric Intensive Care Units, published in 2002.

The best practice standards provide a framework to help address concerns expressed by both service users and practitioners. Concerns expressed include inconsistency of teaching approaches, uncertainty and variation in relation to the use of physical restraint techniques and in the understanding of the potential risks associated with restraint, such as prolonged use of the prone (face down) position .

The best practice standards will help in reviewing current policies, practice, education and training, and in ensuring better value for money in commissioning through evaluating existing training programmes. Progress towards meeting these best practice standards will ensure services are best placed to achieve forthcoming NICE Guidelines.

These guidelines are part of an overall strategy to develop positive practice and safer environments for service users and staff. The strategy also includes the work of the NHS Security Management Service who are developing a national syllabus of training, *Promoting Safer and Therapeutic Services*, for Mental Health and Learning Disability Settings. There will be a requirement for trainers and training to be quality assured. Proposals for the accreditation and regulation of programmes of training and trainers are being developed by the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE).

A Cross Government Group Expert Group has been established and will be developing protocols and strategies on information sharing, referrals, and collaborative working between local mental health services and the police.

To help services further develop local practice, education and training in the recognition, prevention and management of aggression and violence an advisory and consultative service is now available to services and Higher Education Institutions. This

service is provided by two experienced practitioners and managers, Gary O'Hare and Colin Dale. They have been appointed (by NIMHE and the NPSA) to jointly manage the NIMHE programme on the management of aggression and violence. They will be pleased to receive comments or questions arising from this guidance and told of positive practice that can be shared with other services.

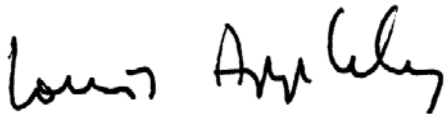
Gary and Colin can be contacted on:

Gary O'Hare	-	0191 223 2830 / 07801 557 897 gary.o'hare@nmht.nhs.uk
Colin Dale	-	07752 460 992 colindale@caringsolutions.fsnet.co.uk

Can you please ensure wide circulation of this guidance within your organisation. Chief Executives should draw this document to the immediate attention of the Board and relevant leads. Hard copies should be ordered for your organisations use. Further copies are available via:

- Web - <http://www.nimhe.org.uk/downloads/78130-DoH-Viol%20Management.pdf>
- Hard copies - from DoH Publications Order Line on 08701 555455 quoting reference 34200; or your local NIMHE Regional Development Centre (www.nimhe.org.uk)

Regards,



PROFESSOR LOUIS APPLEBY