

Mental health nurses under 'intolerable pressure'

January 27 2016, by George Wigmore

Mental health nurses are facing huge pressures because cuts and merging of services are causing a strain on services not seen since the 1980s, according to Alan Simpson, a Professor of Collaborative Mental Health Nursing at City University London.

Mental health services are under increasing strain with recent findings by The Guardian showing that the number of specialist [mental health](#) nurses has fallen more than 10% over the past five years. Recent reports have also highlighted that a spike in mental health patient deaths shows that NHS 'struggling to cope'.

Commenting on the current pressures faced by mental health staff and services, Professor Alan Simpson said:

"There are some fantastic [mental health services](#) and staff in this country but I fear we have reached a tipping point where the combination of pressures has pushed things too far now for users of services, their families and the staff who try their hardest to provide quality services. These pressures have been created by cuts and merging of services, reductions in qualified staff and wider social pressures on people who are struggling to hold things together for whatever reason. All the indicators from research and reports like these today suggest we need an urgent change in the way we invest in and support the people providing care and treatment to those with mental illness and facing severe mental distress.

"Our recent research into the planning and delivery of community mental health care found widespread concerns about the impact of cuts and changes in service provision being pushed through to meet austerity targets. Service users and carers want more contact with qualified care coordinators not less and see the quality of those relationships as key to recovery and returning to work and living a full life. Mental [health nurses](#) and other [staff](#) are now under intolerable pressures as we are returning to caseload figures and demands on services not seen since the 1980s."

Provided by City University London

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