

after transfer she would be arrested. As this was the final case for the day the court closed.

On arrival home the chairman felt that bureaucracy had defeated all of the efforts of the court. In despair he rang the adjoining hospital unit and confirmed a bed was still available. The next call was to the administrator responsible for ECR at the local unit. On being told that the ECR procedure could not be started until after Easter (this was 16.00 hours on the Thursday before) he threatened to take a certain line of action and within one minute ECR was confirmed. Within five minutes, the adjoining hospital unit was re-contacted and assured that he would confirm the ECR in writing. The divisional police headquarters was contacted and agreed to intercept the vehicle conveying the 'patient' to Holloway Prison and divert it to the hospital. Confirmation of this action was agreed by all participating agencies.

In the House of Lords on 10 February 1993, Baroness Cumberledge drew attention to the specific task for mentally disordered offenders referred to within *The Health of the Nation*, adding that the government shall be requiring that the strategic and purchasing plans of all health authorities include the necessary range of health and social services, both secure and non-secure, to enable them to respond to the special needs of this group. It is to be hoped that these plans will ensure that the current minefield encountered in directing mentally disordered offenders into the

health system is cleared. Magistrates who adjudicate in the majority of petty crimes committed by these offenders would benefit from an outline of the powers they have in diverting these people away from the penal system.

The Home Office has indicated (June 1993) that they are considering the production of a booklet which could be issued under cover of a short circular that will be of use to those working in areas where they will be in contact with mentally disordered offenders. This will be warmly welcomed as it will contain key elements that have emerged from local and central initiatives which must be reflected in local arrangements if they are to be effective.

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# Research foundations for psychotherapy\*

*Simon Wessely*

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The estimable Mental Health Foundation organises biannual conferences on areas in which it wishes to encourage research ideas and interest. The last meeting was on violence, and before that the needs of the mentally disordered offender. This year was concerned with research in the psychotherapies. Organised by Mark Aveline and

David Shapiro (who have done much to lay to rest that old shibboleth that research and dynamic psychotherapy cannot be combined), it brought together an impressive list of researchers and practitioners of a variety of psychotherapies.

A constant theme of the meeting was the difficulties in carrying out psychotherapy research, although this often reflected a confusion between demonstrating whether something works, and why it works. The former is no harder in

\*Mental Health Foundation Series. Held at Balliol College, Oxford, 16-17 September 1993.

