

National Patient Safety Agency
 National Reporting and Learning Service

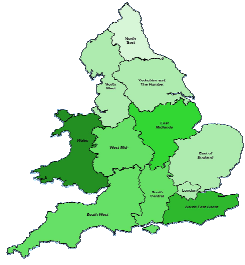
Designing out the means to commit suicide reduces the number of suicides

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 Director of Mental Health and Learning Disability Nursing

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England and Wales



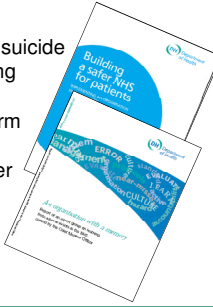
- **Population:** 53,728,800
- **Size:** England 59 Mental Health Trusts
Wales 8 combined NHS organisations that include acute and mental health services
- **Mental health services:** Over 1 million patients, 160,000 admissions
- **Staff:** Psychiatrists = 3,800
Psychiatric nurses = 49,113
Clinical psychologists = 6,800

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Suicide and self-harm ligature points


- 1996-98 = 81 patients committed suicide on mental health wards by hanging
- Designing out the potential for harm
- Target by 2005 reduce the number of suicides as a result of hanging from non-collapsible rails to zero




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"collapsible" shower / curtain rails



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About the NPSA




What we are:

- Arm's Length Body of the Department of Health
- lead national work on patient safety in England and Wales
- overall aim is to help NHS providers improve patient safety

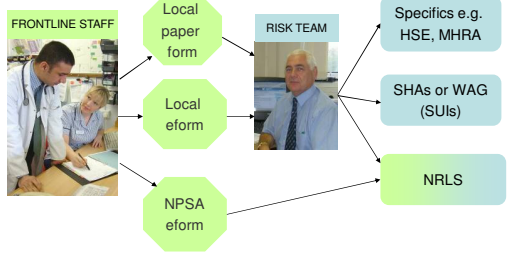
Our vision:

- to lead and contribute to improved, safe patient care by informing, supporting, and influencing organisations and people working in the health sector.


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Reporting Routes



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Historical information

- All non-collapsible rails to be removed by March 2002
- NHS estates launched alerts NHSA (2004) 10
- NPSA PSO 2006 2 incidents where rails did not collapse
- NCISH 2006 extend success in eliminating other ligature points (April 2000 - December 2004)
- NRLS review (Nov 03- Oct 06) 37 incidents of collapsible rails 4 failed to collapse
- DH issued Estates & Facilities Alert June 2007


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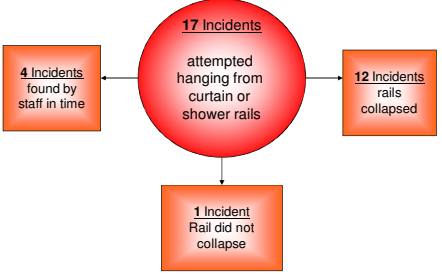
Collapsible shower and curtain rails



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Suicide and self harm: ligature points



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Never Events

- serious, largely preventable patient safety incidents that should not occur if the available preventative measures have been implemented
- inpatient suicide using collapsible rails




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The wider picture

Hanging/self-strangulation – most common method of suicide

- 1997-2006 – 546 suicides of which 417 occurred by hanging, self-strangulation or asphyxiation
- Doors and windows were the most common ligature points
- The most common ligatures were belts, shoelaces and sheets or towels



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Future Developments

The aetiology of in-patient suicide

Examining the antecedents of suicide in three sub-groups of psychiatric in-patients: absconders, patients on agreed leave and patients under non-routine observation. The aim:-

- Identify the socio-demographic features, clinical characteristics and care variables for patients in each of the sub-groups

The study is scheduled to be completed March 2010. On completion this study will help to inform suicide prevention strategies specific to the psychiatric in-patient setting and help to reduce the incidence of suicide among this patient population.

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