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criminal justice systems in countries vulnerable to conflict); and who are involved in the mental healthcare of state-based armed forces.

The special interest group would aim to share experience, expertise and instruments in working in fragile states, conflict and post-conflict areas for the improvement of mental health, its contributions to education, employment and community cohesion, as well as for the protection of the human rights of people with mental illness.

Members are invited to write in support of this group and express willingness to participate in its activities. Interested Members should write to the Registrar, care of Miss Sue Duncan at the College. If 120 members reply to this notice within 4 months of publication, then the Central Executive Committee shall formally approve the establishment of this special interest group.

Professor Sue Bailey Registrar, Royal College of Psychiatrists

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Standards on the use of Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 (2007) (version for England)

College Report CR149, September 2008, £12.50, 66 pp.

Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 gives the police powers to remove a person who appears to be suffering from mental disorder and who is 'in immediate need of care or control' from a public place to a place of safety. Removal may take place if a police officer believes it is necessary in the interests of that person or for the protection of others. The purpose of removing a person to a place of safety (usually a police station cell or hospital emergency department) is to enable them to be assessed by a doctor or interviewed by an allied mental health professional; however, they may be discharged from there without ever having seen a mental health practitioner. Because Section 136 is the only civil

detention under the Mental Health Act for which no statutory form is required, there is a lack of reliable data on the use of Section 136.

This report is a set of standards giving guidance on the use of Section 136. It advocates the provision of dedicated assessment facilities in mental health units, which are adequately staffed. It includes 24 separate recommendations focusing on:

- physical standards of places of safety
- staffing issues
- conveyance of patients between places of safety
- local policy and monitoring of standards (both at the local and the national level).

The report includes the first ever standardised recording form to monitor Section 136 detentions; this will give rise to much-needed data on the quality of care.

This report replaces *CR61: Report of the Working Group on Standards of Places of Safety Under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act (1983)*.

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