

# London Mental health cuts 'put public at risk'

Proposed cuts to mental health services in London could put patients and the public at risk, health bosses warned today. The health service in west London faces a raft of cutbacks in a bid to plug £9 million of debt.

by Rebecca Smith, Evening Standard 6 Apr 2005

<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/articles/17731825?source=Evening%20Standard> (  
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But today doctors attacked further cuts to mental health services, saying reduced funding could mean dangerous patients are released into the community. In a letter to the North West London Strategic Health Authority, a committee representing 100 psychiatrists warned health chiefs that forcing £1million cuts in the area of mental health was "potentially dangerous and unlikely to save money". The warning follows a series of high-profile murders committed by mental health patients where it was found that serious mistakes were made by experts.

John Barrett stabbed Denis Finnegan to death in Richmond Park and Peter Bryan was jailed for life for hacking Brian Cherry to death. Both men were mental patients who had been allowed to walk out of hospital.

Last month the Standard revealed that Kensington and Chelsea Primary Care Trust (PCT), which pays for treatment for patients in its area, is facing a £9 million financial black hole out of a total budget of £288million...

Peter Carter, chief executive of the trust, said any cuts to services would be almost impossible.

"The PCT still has a financial problem," he said. "We must protect our frontline services because there isn't any room to cut them. For the last eight years we have balanced the books and we have run safe services. But I cannot think of a single service we can cut safely." ([full article \(http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/articles/17731825?source=Evening%20Standard \)](http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/articles/17731825?source=Evening%20Standard))