

**FINDING & TELLING
HUMAN-STORIES
THROUGH NUMBERS**

FATIMA HUDOON



Separated: The damaging rise in people sent to private mental health hospitals away from family

By Fatima Hudoon on 15th June, 2020

FEATURES | INSIDE: BRISTOL'S PRIVATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: mental health



Local NHS bosses have vowed to end mental health out-of-area





Inside: Young and pregnant in a mental health hospital for the first time

By Fatima Hudoon on 17th August, 2020

FEATURES | INSIDE: BRISTOL'S PRIVATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: mental health



A young pregnant woman detained under the Mental Health Act for the first time shares her experience of being sent miles away from home. Both mum and daughter tell their story of navigating through the complex mental health system.

CONTEXT

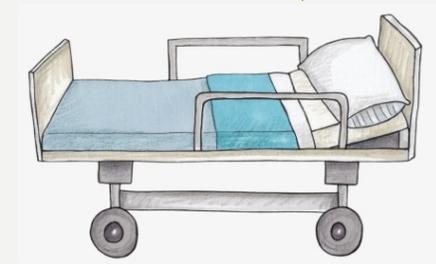
- [‘Inside: Private mental health services in Bristol investigated’](#) – a Bristol Cable series trying to uncover the private sector involvement in MH services and its impact on people in Bristol –
- Focus today: Data-driven articles on Out of Area Placements (OAPs)



Instead of



because of NO



= Inapp. OAP

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- ****Disclaimer/warning****
- Inquest: Vickars v Cygnet Healthcare
- NHS, underfunding; services cut but demand still high; Privatisation esp. in mental health services; Outsourcing responsibility?;
- **Issues:** inadequate community MH services = pressure on hospital beds; patients sent far away = not good for recovery; OAPs have high cost to the public

“ Treating patients close to home speeds up recovery, reduces the risk of suicide and shortens hospital stays”

— President of RCPSYCH

FROM INQUEST...

- Dom sent to Kewstoke due to bed shortage under DP NHS Trust
- Inquest verdict: hospital did not sufficiently protect Dom
- Main issues: poor quality of care, 'inadequate' risk assessment, lack of communication, distance, lack of beds, NHS outsourcing to private companies

What about Bristol's NHS mental health provider?



...TO NHS DATA

Series / Collection

Out of Area Placements in Mental Health Services

Official statistics

Frequency: Monthly

Geographic Coverage: England

Geographical Granularity:

Country, Regions, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Mental Health Trusts, Independent Sector Health Care Providers, NHS Trusts



**Avon and Wiltshire Mental
Health Partnership**
NHS Trust

WHAT IS THE DATA TELLING YOU?

- **Focus:** AWP, number of OAPs in 2019, receiving hospitals, length of stay, cost (important to narrow down)
- **Main finding:** Number of OAPs due to lack of beds in 2019 increased by 19% compared to 2018 – but overall decrease from 2016/2017
- **Additional findings:**
 - Increase in average number of days spent in the hospital (negatively impacts person's recovery)
 - How much inappr. OAPs cost the NHS and how much companies received
 - Where patients were sent, and which companies run the hospitals
 - From CQC report: establish hospital ratings; AWP at 95-100% capacity
- **Methods:** filtering, sorting and pivoting (minor cleaning)



PRIORY

THE HUMAN STORY

- **Why:** more relatable for the reader; a human story makes data personal
- **Profile:** s.o. who had some experience with OAPs, as a former patient or as a relative of a former patient, in Bristol via AWP, sent far away, ideally in 2019.
- **How:** Reached out to the Bristol Cable network of members, personal contacts & online; contacted mental health charities and independent organisations



RACHEL'S STORY

- ...as a carer for her son
- Multiple conversations & in-depth interviews
- Issues raised: distance, communication, at times poor quality of care, financial issues, power and racial dynamics,
- 2Way Str. – connecting parents and carers from African and Caribbean backgrounds
- Rachel's story as a way into the data findings

“I've got bins of debt because I couldn't pay my bills because my son had to come first... and he was so far away. I have had a debt relief order, I nearly hit bankruptcy”

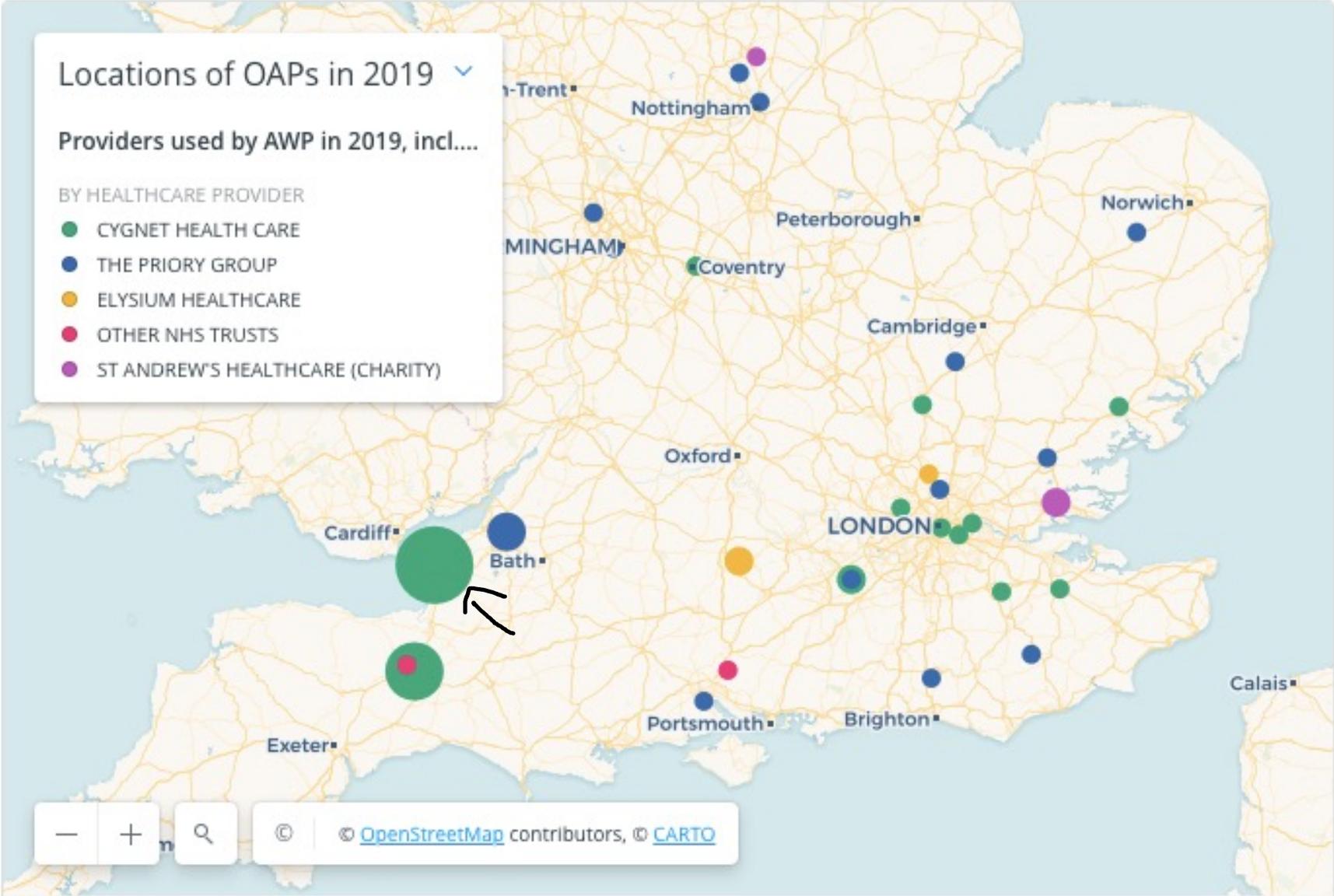
*“The [mental health] system isn't built up to be **proactive or preventative, it waits for it to get in crisis** and we don't have the spaces here in Bristol, we physically don't”*

Locations of OAPs in 2019

Providers used by AWP in 2019, incl....

BY HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

- CYGNET HEALTH CARE
- THE PRIORY GROUP
- ELYSIUM HEALTHCARE
- OTHER NHS TRUSTS
- ST ANDREW'S HEALTHCARE (CHARITY)



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Map by Fatima Hudoon

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“In the night time you would have one-to-one watch (observation) the whole time, but you would have male staff coming in sitting by your door watching you sleep”

“I had a little teddy with me which I always kept by my side because it was really scary in there”

FOLLOW-UP STORY



Local mental health trust misses deadline to stop sending people far away from home, data shows

By Fatima Hudoon on 17th June, 2021

INSIDE: BRISTOL'S PRIVATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES | REPORTS: mental health

“We have to break the ongoing cycle of treating crises rather than preventing them. This can only be achieved by investing sustainably in mental health social care” — Rethink Mental Illness

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Know what your data is telling you **AND** not telling you (But be aware of your questions)
- Narrow down your focus but also be open minded
- The central question after findings: How can you make this data relatable? Why should anyone care?
- Build a human profile of who you're looking
- Reach out to relevant bodies, personal contacts, any networks; use social media (#journorequest)
- Speak to **PEOPLE**
- → It's doable (and doesn't have to be scary)

QUESTIONS?

- Email: fatimahudoon@protonmail.com
- Twitter: @FHudoon

THANK YOU!

LINKS

- If you want to learn more about mental health services in Bristol and wider context
 - Bristol Cable [series blog](#) giving a background
 - OAP stories ([here](#), [here](#) and [here](#))
 - Other Cable stories: [Inquest investigation](#), [children ward closure](#)
- Other examples of data-driven stories with strong storytelling
 - The Guardian's [datablog](#) has incredible stories. My personal favourite is [here](#) about the Snowden leaks.
 - Another favourite but more recent one from The Sunday Times on the [House of Lords](#) (It has a paywall but maybe try [Wayback machine](#); alternatively here's a [Twitter thread](#) summarising most of it)
- Really useful breakdown of data-driven stories [here](#)
- [More about the Bristol Cable](#) who I used to work for