

# GMB reports Swindon Council to Care Quality Commission



## **GMB believes Swindon are failing to properly provide Approved Mental Health Practitioner services**

GMB, the union for social workers, has formally complained to the CQC, the regulatory body for the care industry, about Swindon Borough Council's Emergency Duty Service.

The EDS is a team within the council which provides specialist, emergency care to vulnerable children and adults through Approved Mental Health Practitioners (AMHPs).

The union has identified occasions when it believes the council were not meeting their obligations under the Mental Health Act 1983 and **has written to the CQC** as well as Social Work England, and other



stakeholders in mental health care provision, including the police, and local NHS trusts.

The letter has been written following several attempts by the union to raise the issue with council officers and elected cabinet members without, the union believes, the issues being suitably addressed.

**Andy Newman, GMB Branch Secretary, said:**

“The law is clear that SBC has a responsibility to provide 24 hour cover with fully-trained mental health professionals – these AMHPs.

“Prior to September 2023, this 24/7 cover was maintained, however, three quarters of the AMHPs have now left and the training budget to bring on new AMHPs for out of hours service has been frozen.

“Since September there have only been two AMHPs in the service – and in December this goes down to one – and GMB knows of incidents where the police or NHS trusts have sought specialist mental health support from SBC at night or at the weekend, and the council has not had a qualified person to respond.

“SBC are locked into a macho culture of refusing to discuss problems and seek solutions with GMB, and promises made to GMB personally by the council leader Jim Robbins have been broken.

“It is time that the council gets off its high horse and starts working with their staff – and not against them – to solve these problems.”

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