

INFORMED CHOICES

A NEW PRODUCT TESTING STANDARD

Developed in partnership

BRE and DIMHN



Why do we need to test products for robustness and ligature safety in mental health environments?

Testing products helps:

- Manage risk
- Support choosing the right product for the right setting and user group
- Create therapeutic environments for service users
- Create good working environments for staff.

BUT until now there has no formal process across the NHS or private sector for reliably testing product suitability for use in mental health environments for robustness and ligature safety. Terms like 'anti-ligature' and 'ligature reduction' can be dangerous and misleading, suggesting that all products using that term perform equally.

INFORMED CHOICES – the new product testing standard for mental health

Finding a solution to this problem, Design in Mental Health Network, in partnership with BRE – Building Research Establishment – has worked with over 100 experts over the last 7 years, to develop a global testing method. This test can be applied to all products used in mental health environments and provide them with an assessment of their ligature performance by a UKAS accredited test body.

This is not a pass or fail test, it is an assessment that gives a graded measure of ligature reduction performance, enabling clinicians and estates planners to make the right choice for user group and product location.

What are the next steps?

Design in Mental Health Network has issued a call out for architects, construction companies and NHS Trusts to take a pledge committing to the new standard. The signature below is confirmation that our organisation has committed to ***THE INFORMED CHOICES PLEDGE:***

We will ask suppliers to provide DIMHN/BRE Informed Choices product performance assessment going forward. Initially this will be encouraged with preferential consideration given for products backed by independent performance assessment.

No minimum performance will be required, but performance of different products will be compared.

We commit to trialling the new standard with the intent that this will become a mandatory requirement for supply to our organisation by 2025, to allow time for all suppliers to test their products.

Founding pledge partners:



Commitment to the INFORMED CHOICES pledge:

Name of organisation_____

Signatory job title on behalf of organisation_____

Signatory name_____

Signature_____

Date_____

What are the next steps for our suppliers?

As part of our involvement in taking the pledge, we're asking you as a responsible manufacturer active in mental health design and construction sector, to get your products tested and share performance certification to help us make informed product choices.

You can find more information about the testing and certification scheme here on the BRE website:

<https://bregroup.com/services/testing/mental-health-product-testing/>

<https://bregroup.com/services/testing-certification-verification/products-for-mental-health-safeguarding-promhs/>