

Mental Health and Employment

Update January 2010

1. Content

In Devon we know that there are about 620,000 adults, 62,000 who at any one time will not have mental wellbeing. We also know that employment is a key indicator of social inclusion and has a major influence on the mental health and wellbeing of individuals. In addition there are many factors which influence and determine the employability of individuals and equally the ability of employers to recruit and retain people who have mental health challenges.

Devon PCT and Devon County Council commission services:

- That explicitly support people with mental health challenges to access vocational and employment services;
- That provide access to mental health expertise, particularly psychological therapies, through GP settings.

During 2010 and beyond investment will be increased in both vocational and employment services and psychological therapies to improve access to services across Devon.

2. Mental Health Employment Network (MHEN)

2.1 The Mental Health Employment Sub Group of the Devon Worklessness Group has created Devon's MHEN. The members of the Network include:

Job Centre Plus – Sue Parr
Citizens Advice - Chris Hole
PLUSS – Tom Bromwich
St Loyes – Paula Sudbury
A4E – Rebecca Robb
Devon Partnership Trust (DPT) – Ralph Hayward
DPT Workways – Christine Wardle
NHS Devon – Ian Pearson
Devon Provider Services (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) – Kevin Dudman
Working Links? – Simon Goodenough
Promoting Health and Emotional Wellbeing (PHEW) Service – Amanda Williamson

2.2 The purpose of the network is:

To focus on practical action that:

- Utilises current expertise to best effect;
- Simplifies arrangements for people who need support;
- Enables staff to work collaboratively;

Make a positive impact on:

- People in work
- People in danger of losing work

- People recently out of work
- People out of work longer term
- Employers

2.3 Work to date

Members of the MHEN have met to:

- (1) Share information and seek opportunities for collaborative work;
- (2) Develop a whole system approach, with benefits to individual organisations;
- (3) Create three fixed term (until April 2011) mental health employment co-ordination posts (1.4 WTE) to work closely with the JC+ mental health co-ordinator.

These posts will be hosted by Workways (DPT) or PLUSS.

The posts holders will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Work in partnership with IAPT practitioners to ensure that clients are given accurate, timely and appropriate vocational advice.
- Facilitate appropriate applications to Workways, PLUSS and other specialist mental health employment providers from the IAPT practitioners.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships between *WorkWAYS*, PLUSS and learning and work providers, especially Jobcentre Plus.
- Work closely with other Employment Support Co-ordinators to ensure parity of provision across the Devon area.
- Support employers, placement providers and learning and work organisations to enable the client to sustain their position. This will involve regular communication with these others to provide advice, guidance and training on how to manage a particular situation.
- Promote and publicise *WorkWAYS*/IAPT Employment Service to learning and work providers and the wider community by giving talks or presentations as agreed with service manager.
- Keep the *WorkWAYS*/IAPT team informed of current work to ensure continuity of work at times of absence.
- Work closely with the whole *WorkWAYS* team and cover others work as needed, this may include covering admin and reception duties at times of staff shortages.
- Liaise regularly with IAPT practitioners, care co-ordinators, people who use services and carers groups and other health related agencies over learning and work issues.

Recruitment to a post in Exeter is underway, with recruitment to South and North Devon posts will follow.

- (4) Agree an engagement process that will bring together community interests to create a mental wellbeing directory, with specific focus on employment. Led by PHEW, the process will include Devon workshops (March 2010 and 2011) and locality workshops (from April 2010). The product will be an online mental wellbeing directory and also the delivery of joint training programmes for staff working in mental health or employment services.

2.4 The MHEN group usually meets on a monthly basis and will welcome new members.

Ian Pearson

Joint Commissioning Manager - Adult Mental Health

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