

Everybody's Business

Integrated mental health services for older adults: a service development guide

Setting the scene

Providing services for people with mental health problems can be complex, as they cut across health and social care, physical and mental health and mainstream and specialist services. Making sure that people's needs are met in a co-ordinated way, and that they don't fall between gaps in the system, is essential.

The aim of the Service Development Guide is to ensure that older adults with mental health problems, and their carers, have their needs met wherever they are in the system, without encountering discrimination or barriers to access.

Produced by the Department of Health, it is being rolled out by the Care Services Improvement Partnership, which was established in 2005 to support improvements in services and in the wellbeing of a number of service user and patient groups.

The Guide is not about developing new policies – it is about improving health and social care practice at the front line.

We need to bring together existing policies and examples of good practice to develop co-ordinated services that focus on people's mental health and physical needs - not their age - and promote respect and dignity.

The Guide is committed to:

- Improving people's quality of life
- Meeting complex needs in a co-ordinated way
- Providing a person-centred approach
- Promoting age equality.

It has been developed to inform local discussions on how services should be commissioned and delivered. It should also help health and social care professionals to make continuous improvements to local services so that they meet the needs of older people with mental health problems more effectively.

Background to the new Guide

The Guide is the next step in improving mental health and care services for older people.

It builds on the service models outlined in the *National Service Framework for Older People* (May 2001) and supports the principles promoted in *Securing Better Mental Health for Older Adults* (June 2005), by describing the foundations and key elements of a comprehensive service for older adults with mental health needs.

The Older People's Mental Health Mapping framework, launched in November 2005 to coincide with the publication of the Guide, will support local commissioning decisions by providing national benchmarking for local services.

Supporting material and guidance

The Guide is also supported by a comprehensive web-based resource, which provides valuable information for anyone involved in health and social care for older people with mental health problems. The web site includes guidance on best practice, local service examples and links to relevant policy.

The Service Development Guide provides comprehensive advice and action points for all those commissioning and providing health and social care for older people with mental health problems.

Six key messages for commissioners

1. Older people's mental health is everybody's business

- Mental health problems in older people are common and England's ageing population means that demand will increase.
- The direct cost of Alzheimer's disease alone exceeds the combined cost of stroke, cancer and heart disease.

2. Improving services for older people with mental health problems will help meet national targets and standards

- Forward-looking commissioning strategies can help improve outcomes for service users and carers and generate savings by improving the efficiency of health and social care services.
- Due to the widespread nature of mental health problems in people who use health and social care services, improving mental wellbeing in older people will support the delivery of a number of national targets and core standards. These include reducing emergency bed days, enabling people to live independently at home and reducing suicides.

3. Access to mental health services should be based on need not age

- The Department of Health is committed to age equality in mental health services, with people receiving appropriate care based on their needs, not their age.
- Commissioners need to consider how mental health services can be user led rather than service led.
- It is still important to recognise the specialist service requirements of older people with mental illness.

4. Older people need holistic care in mainstream services

- The Department of Health is committed to developing health and care services that address both mental health and physical health needs.
- Services should start with the needs of the individual and aim to support and maximise the wellbeing and independence of older people and carers.
- Commissioners need to consider whether older people's mental health needs are being addressed in mainstream services.

5. Workforce development is central to driving service improvement

- Older people with mental health problems and their carers often have complex needs. Effective workforce development, education and training of health and social care staff are essential.
- It is vital that mainstream staff are included in this process as well as staff specialising in mental health care.

6. Whole system commissioning and leadership are vital to deliver a comprehensive service.

- Commissioners need to adopt a co-ordinated approach across health and social care services, physical and mental health services and mainstream and specialist provision - with links to housing, the voluntary sector etc
- Older people's mental health issues should be considered as part of any response to the White Paper on improving community health and care services and the vision for adult social care outlined in *Independence, Wellbeing and Choice*.
- Strong leadership across health, social services and local authorities is needed to communicate the vision for older people's mental health and deliver effective and lasting results.

What the Guide covers

The Guide covers a range of important areas. These include:

- Adopting a whole systems approach to commissioning integrated services for older people with mental health services - improving their quality of life and meeting key PSA targets.
- Involving service users and carers by developing ongoing communication that gives service users and their carers a genuine say in the decisions that affect them.
- Preparing joint local health promotion strategies aimed at the general population and at-risk groups, which address the needs of carers and incorporate suicide prevention strategies.
- Making sure that assessment and care planning are co-ordinated and that the service user receives continuity of care and is clear about who they, or their carer, should turn to for advice.
- Developing culturally appropriate services and breaking down barriers by involving voluntary, statutory, independent and community organisations as well as service users and carers.
- Providing staff with ongoing training and development so that they have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver effective services in a range of health and social settings.
- Demonstrating strong leadership by communicating vision and delivering results.

The Guide also looks in detail at specific areas of health and social care:

- Primary and community care - primary care, home care, day services, housing, assistive technology and telecare and care in residential settings.
- Intermediate care
- Care for people in the general hospital
- Other specialist mental health services - integrated community mental health teams, memory assessment services, psychological therapies and inpatient care
- Special groups - younger people with dementia, older people with learning disabilities and older prisoners who need mental health care.

How service and financial mapping can help

The Older People's Mental Health Mapping framework was launched in November 2005 to coincide with the publication of the Guide.

A similar process of mapping, which allows monitoring of service development, has already been developed as part of the National Service Frameworks for mental health and for children. This has also proved invaluable for local providers and commissioners as a basis for commissioning discussions, as it provides a transparent way of benchmarking service elements alongside local activity data.

The mapping framework should help organisations understand local service arrangements and explore how some service elements may replace others. It also aims to identify ageism in service delivery and provide the basis of a local service directory for users and carers.

Services are identified by type and described in some detail, including staffing, availability and functions.

A copy of the Older People's Mental Health Mapping framework can be downloaded from www.opmhmapping.org.uk

Other resources

A number of resources are available which provide information on commissioning services that meet the needs of older people with mental health problems, including guidance on integrating health and social care.

These include a commissioning checklist based on the key elements in this Guide, together with preliminary economic data, which can be found on www.everybodysbusiness.org.uk

Some initial benchmarking data is also provided on the website with more extensive data expected from those services participating fully in the financial and service mapping exercise.

In addition, the National Institute for Mental Health in England is involved in ongoing work to make the NHS Modernisation Agency's 10 High Impact Changes more relevant to mental health services.

Mental health problems in England

Mental health problems become more common as people get older and England's population is ageing. The number of people over 65 will increase by 15 per cent in the next ten years and the number of people over 90 is expected to double in the next 30 years.

It is estimated that:

- 40 per cent of older people attending GP surgeries, 50 per cent of general hospital patients and 60 per cent of care home residents have mental health needs.
- Between 12 and 15 per cent of people over 65 suffer from depression - this is more common in people suffering from long-term physical disorders
- Dementia affects one person in 20 over the age of 65 and one person in five over 80.
- It costs more to look after people with dementia than stroke, cancer and heart disease added together.

In a typical district of 250,000 people, there will be 45,000 (18%) who are aged 65 or over. Of these:

- 4,500 to 6,750 will have depression – including 1,500 with severe depression
- 6,000 will have anxiety-related disorders
- 900 will have psychosis-related disorders
- 2,250 will have dementia
- 2,000 will be living with the consequences of stroke – 1,000 of these will experience mood disorders and 700 will need to adjust to living with reduced cognitive skills.

About the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP)

Established on 1 April 2005, after formal consultation, CSIP's main goal is to support improvements in services and in the wellbeing of:

- People with mental health problems
- People with learning disabilities
- People with physical disabilities
- Older people with health and social care needs
- Children and families with health and social care needs and
- People with health and social care needs in the criminal justice system.

We are part of the Care Services Directorate of the Department of Health and most of our staff and services are based in eight regional development centres across England. This enables us to respond flexibly to the needs of people, locally, regionally and nationally.

More information

You can download copies of the Service Development Guide and further copies of this fact sheet from www.everybodysbusiness.org.uk

If you don't have access to the internet please call 020 7972 4606. For further information, please contact your regional office.

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To find out more about CSIP's work please visit our website www.csip.org.uk or contact your local regional office.

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