

Mental Health News

NHS North West supporting progress toward PSA16 for people with mental health needs

The Mental Health News e-bulletin is a daily bulletin issued by the Mental Health Improvement Programme (MHIP) containing an item relating to a Mental Health issue, development or outcome in the North West.

The aim is to bring awareness to our stakeholders about service improvement and innovative projects underway in Mental Health across the North West, and to encourage you (the reader) to act as vehicle for ensuring that you or your organisation is engaged with the work where applicable.

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In mid November NHS North West via the Mental Health Improvement Programme (MHIP) will be seeking expressions of interest to set up a series of pilot Individual Placement Support (IPS) sites across the North West to progress Public Sector Agreement (PSA) 16 for people with Mental Health needs.

The IPS employment/vocational support model outlined in [Vocational services for people with serious mental health problems: Commissioning Guidance](#) offers a structured and systematic model of support in helping people return to employment and has demonstrated positive outcomes and has been subject to robust evaluation and research.

The IPS approach involves assessing vocational skills and preferences relatively quickly and then attempting to place people in employment settings that are consistent with their abilities and interests, where they can develop their skills in the work environment while being provided with ongoing support. Support is also provided to the employer in order to ensure maintenance of the placement. The underpinning commissioning principles for vocational services for people with severe mental health problems are that 1) priority is accorded to enabling people to retain and gain paid employment and mainstream education, including the provision of support to retain and gain employment/education and 2) where it is not possible for a person to access paid employment due to the extent of their support or supervision needs, or there is an individual preference not to access paid employment, then access to mainstream education and voluntary work is needed.

There are five key elements to a comprehensive range of vocational services for people with severe mental health problems, these are: 1) clinical employment leads within secondary services; 2) employment specialists integrated with clinical teams; 3) public services as exemplar employers; 4) supported work opportunities and local partnership arrangements between specialist and mainstream providers; 5) having appropriate commissioner input.

MHIP will be writing to Mental Health Commissioners in PCTs encouraging expressions of interest in seeking funding to pilot the IPS model in a range of services including Early Intervention for Psychosis Teams, Acute Inpatient Teams and Primary Care pathways. Further details via: Simon.Rippon@northwest.nhs.uk

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