

Employability Learning Network



Case Study

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

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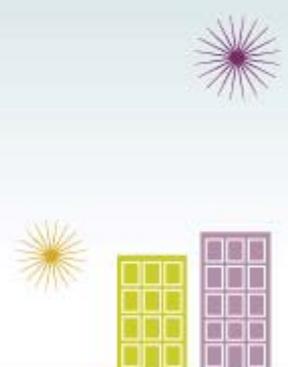
Background to the project

We have a team of Employment Development Workers in Aberdeenshire supporting people with mild mental ill health with regard to employability issues. They help people to gain and sustain a job. They work with local employers, signpost service users to Jobcentreplus and other benefits agencies as well as further education, set up supported work placements, support and guide people into voluntary work and open employment.

Four years ago we became aware that a substantial amount of referrals were coming from Primary Care Mental Health Workers (PCMHWs) who began working closely with GPs as part of the Talking Therapies programme supported by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE). Employment was often being identified as an issue resulting from the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) counselling that the PCMHWs were doing with their patients.

To deal with these additional referrals we applied to the Healthy Working Lives fund for workers to provide support. We already did employability work with service users referred to us usually many had fairly severe mental ill health issues and required longer term support. However this was an opportunity to work in partnership with the NHS to facilitate interventions that would ultimately avoid service users having to become dependent on either social type services or other medical services. We received funding for two full-time and two part-time posts to work in Aberdeenshire.

We take as many referrals as we can and have been very busy since the start of the project. It has been a learning curve for us working in partnership with the NHS and the PCMHWs - we have found that the partnership working of the two organisations has been of great benefit to the service users.



Who is the Project for:

The project is for service users who would be considered to have mild to moderate mental health issues caused by having difficulties in the workplace. The emphasis is to avoid people having to be referred for further medical or social services by achieving early intervention.

Partnership working:

We take referrals from Primary Care Mental Health Workers they are based in GPs surgeries. The GPs refer service users for CBT counselling and, if employment is identified, the referral is made to our service. The PCMHWs move around GPs surgeries within Aberdeenshire.

Referral Criteria:

The service user is supported over a maximum of 5 sessions. We have identified that any more than this usually means that the person is in need of more intensive services. We refer on.

Outcomes:

On average workers support 48 referrals each over the course of a year.

Current funding:

Currently this is a combination of social work funding plus a contribution from the [Fairer Scotland Fund](#). This funding is only guaranteed until March 2011

Why has it been successful:

The service users referred to us appreciate being able to meet a support worker in a private setting to discuss their issues in confidence. Often the employment workers can work without the rigidity of being part of a complex reporting system and will have skills and knowledge that can assist with enabling a person to move forward into employment or retain the job they have.

Having a limit on the number of sessions enables the service user to feel that they have not been referred into a long term service.

We have achieved outcomes for 95% of service users referred.

We have developed good relationships and systems between the NHS and ourselves. We operate in a rural area and if these solid partnership working relationships did not exist we could not hope to achieve the positive outcomes that we have.

