

Transforming employment support for people with mental health conditions: An evaluation of two pilots in Camden

Summary

Individual Placement Support (IPS) Pilot (Jan 2016 to May 2017) and Work and Wellbeing Pilot (March 2016 to May 2017)

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Researched and written by:
Suhana Begum, Knowledge and Information Officer
Camden and Islington Public Health

Research team:
Mubasshir Ajaz, Mahnaz Shaukat and Victoria Makepeace-Warne
Camden and Islington Public Health
Helen Iles and Sean Shields
Camden Economic Development team

Summary

- Camden Council aims to reduce unemployment and to tackle health inequalities in the borough.
- Camden Individual Placement Support (IPS) and Camden Work and Wellbeing were two new services designed by the Council to support people with mental health needs into employment. Camden IPS offered support to people with severe mental health conditions (e.g. schizophrenia). Camden Work and Wellbeing was offered to people with common mental health concerns (e.g. depression). The type of support offered, included help with benefits and lifestyle issues.
- The new services were tested with a 'pilot' study. The pilot assessed whether this specialist support helped people to find and stay in employment.
- Information about how the services performed was collected at the beginning, middle (after 9 months) and end of the pilot (after 18 months).
- To assess the Camden IPS service, staff from the mental health services (Camden Rehabilitation and Recovery service (R&R) and Camden Early Intervention Service (EIS)) who were supporting people and referring them into the employment service were asked to provide feedback. 32 members of staff provided feedback through a questionnaire, and another 12 staff members took part in an interview and group discussion about their views of the service and referring people in. Four people who took part in the pilot were also interviewed.
- To assess the Work and Wellbeing service, feedback was collected from five staff members from mental health services and five people taking part in the pilot using interviews. People accessing the pilot also completed questionnaires to measure their anxiety and general health.
- The costs of running the new services were also assessed.

Camden IPS

- The Camden IPS service was offered from January 2016 to May 2017.
- During this time, 30 people were supported by an employment advisor into paid employment. Eight of those people stayed in employment for more than six months.
- People who accessed the IPS service highlighted three important topics:
 - *Impact of employment support on health and wellbeing.* Advice specifically around mental health in the workplace was thought to be useful.
 - *Experience of Camden Work and Wellbeing.* An increase in confidence and knowledge, and a positive impact on career goals, was reported.
 - *Suggestions for pilot improvements.* Service users wanted the support to go on for longer than was offered during the pilot so they could continue to access support whilst in work.

- Staff highlighted five important topics:
 - *Staff experience of supporting clients into employment.* Staff noticed that the people they referred into the pilots responded positively to support.
 - *Collaborative working with staff on the pilot.* Getting feedback from programme staff about the progress of the people they had referred into the pilots was useful.
 - *Staff perceptions of the impact of support on clients.* Staff noticed an increase in people’s knowledge and confidence in looking for employment.
 - *Limited capacity of staff in their own role and how employment support fits in.* Offering people additional support i.e. employment support was not always feasible for staff working in mental health services. Having additional support available with the employment services was helpful.
 - *Pilot highly valued by staff.* Staff saw employment as a key part of mental health recovery.

Camden Work and Wellbeing

- The Work and Wellbeing service was offered from March 2016 to May 2017.
- During this time, 159 people received help to improve their employability (75% of people referred to the programme accessed employment support).
- Almost a quarter (23%) of clients who accessed the service also showed improvements in their mental health whilst on the programme.
- People who accessed the Work and Wellbeing service highlighted three important topics::
 - *Impact of employment support on health and wellbeing.* People found it useful to have tailored advice specifically around mental health in the workplace.
 - *Experience of Camden Work and Wellbeing.* People reported an increase in confidence and knowledge of entering employment and it had a positive impact on their career goals.
 - *Suggestions for pilot improvements.* They would have liked the support to go on for longer.
- Staff highlighted two important topics:
 - *Collaborative working with staff on the pilot.* Staff felt supporting people alongside other support would be most helpful for people referred into the service.
 - *Staff perceptions of the impact of support on clients.* Staff noticed that people responded positively to support and noticed an increase in their knowledge and confidence in seeking employment.

- The costs reviewed showed it is more expensive to support people with mental health needs into employment due to their more complex needs (e.g. the needs for additional support / interventions). However, employment has better long term outcomes for people, such as being financially independent. It becomes cost-effective in the long-term as people have better health outcomes (including mental health).

CONCLUSIONS

- Camden IPS and Work and Wellbeing were successful in supporting people who saw an employment advisor to access employment.
- The evaluation shows that the employment support pilots improve confidence and knowledge of entering work for people and is in line with the commitment of the council to reduce inequalities under the Camden Plan.
- The pilot study has helped the council to learn more about how people engage with employment support services and how people feel about employment services.
- The study will be used to inform decisions about future council employment support services. Following on from the success of the programmes, a new three year programme will be delivered in the borough.

Contact details

- If you have any questions or would like any further information, please contact Suhana Begum, Knowledge and Information Officer, Camden and Islington Public Health suhana.begum@islington.gov.uk