

## **Additional Resource 3:**

### **Sample service specification for Vocational Service**

#### **1. Introduction**

This document specifies the quality and standards of the services required by XXXXXXXXXXXX Commissioning Agency for the provision of Vocational Services. The standards set out in this document are the minimum requirements.

The **aim** of this service is to enable people with mental health problems to formulate and achieve their vocational ambitions – finding paid employment or self employment in the ordinary labour market, or taking steps towards these goals in the form of volunteering, education and training.

#### **2. Philosophy of the service**

Everyone who experiences mental health problems has the right to individually-tailored support to obtain employment (or develop self employment) that matches their preferences, their strengths and their needs.

The service will work in partnership with local agencies and groups in the locality to expand opportunities for people who use the services, encouraging people to achieve their full potential and supporting individuals to gain sustainable employment.

The service will be underpinned by the philosophies of recovery and social inclusion

The service will be delivered in accordance with the key principles of the evidence-based Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approach to vocational services.

The key principles of the IPS approach are as follows:

- A focus on paid employment with a primary goal of paid employment in integrated settings
- Eligibility is based on an individual's preferences and anyone who chooses to work is given the help to do so
- Programmes should involve rapid job search and minimal pre-vocational training
- Vocational programmes are integrated into the work of clinical teams
- Attention to client preferences and choice is important
- There should be availability of time-unlimited support and this should be tailored to the person's individual needs
- Benefits counselling should be provided to help people maximise in work welfare benefits.
- The service will also be available to 'early referrals' to assist people who are newly unwell and signed off work to retain employment

The service will respond to individual's preference and strengths and encourage people to be active in planning their own work placements and job search activities.

The service will be provided to everyone who needs it, regardless of, but responsive to, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, past history, level of disability or diagnosis.

The service shall seek to provide a service for individuals with challenging behaviours, including those with forensic history, personality disorder and those with drug/alcohol dependency problems.

Users of the service will be considered full and equal partners in the running of this service. Users shall receive support to participate in the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the service.

### **3. Service objectives**

- To enable individuals to formulate, achieve and sustain their vocational goals, in a supportive and empowering environment
- To support individuals to gain and retain quality, sustainable employment.
- To offer support in order for individuals to develop their skills and gain new ones in line with their interests, through vocational training and practical work experiences as part of a range of stepping stones to employment
- To provide, directly or through partner organizations, careers advice and accurate benefits information to enable people to make informed decisions around taking up and keeping in employment
- To challenge the low expectations about, and raise awareness of, the employability of people who have experienced mental health problems
- To act as one of the key links between mental health and employment providers
- To provide employment advice to care coordinators, employers and other interested parties where necessary
- To utilize local resources e.g. Learn Direct, employment agencies, Jobcentre Plus, Citizen's Advice Bureau
- To work as an integral member of the mental health clinical teams
- To advise individuals on benefits e.g. in work benefits, permitted work

#### **4. Service outcomes**

- Increased numbers of people with mental health problems supported to formulate their vocational goals through individual plans (100%)
- Increased numbers of people with mental health problems finding paid employment or self employment.
- Increased number of people with mental health problems retaining employment at 3/6/9/12+ months
- 'Early referrals' to the service assisted to retain their employment e.g. through being supported to negotiate reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act with their employer.
- Increased numbers of people with mental health problems entering time-limited vocational training, voluntary work, work experience or other activity that helps them move towards employment
- A named Employment Adviser for each clinical team.
- Increased numbers of individuals receiving services from clinical teams and day services moving towards employment.
- Improved awareness of the employability of people with mental health problems within community teams, acute in-patient teams and other agencies.
- Increased awareness of mental health issues among local employers and their readiness to employ individuals with mental health problems

#### **5. Service delivery**

##### **5.1 Referrals and information**

- Referrals shall be from any source including acute services, community teams (e.g. CMHTs, Mental Health in Primary Care, Assertive Outreach), self-referrals, Jobcentre Plus and local mental health agencies
- The service provider shall provide full, written information about the service, its aims and objectives

##### **5.2 Physical environment**

- The Employment Advisers will be peripatetic, meeting service users in Hubs, drop-ins, the workplace or any venue appropriate for client and adviser.

##### **5.3 Vocational needs**

- Users of the service to be able to choose the types, pace and direction of employment support they receive from the service

- Every individual to have a named Employment Adviser as the key point of contact throughout the job search process and continuing in-work support
- Each individual to receive as much support as necessary (and no more) to achieve their employment goals; including on-going support once employment gained.
- Personal profiling of individual's strengths, skills, past education and training, aspirations and support needs
- Time-limited work experience/preparation where needed as part of an individual return to work plan
- Rapid job search, for competitive employment in integrated work settings
- Ongoing, time-unlimited and flexible supports appropriate to the individual
- Timely, accurate and up-to-date welfare benefits advice and guidance
- The development of a full range of employment opportunities - full time, part-time, permitted earnings, benefits disregard, self-employment, permanent and temporary.
- Close and integrated working with relevant clinical teams to ensure common purpose and continuity of care. [This could include in-patient services, CMHTs, Mental Health in Primary Care Teams, Crisis Resolution Home Treatment Teams, Assertive Outreach etc)
- Employment Advisers to provide expert advice and support to care co-ordinators to enable them to facilitate their clients in moving towards vocational goals
- Employment Advisers will work closely with Clinical Vocational Leads (a community team member who will provide a clinical perspective on vocational rehabilitation, offering advice and guidance on vocational matters to other team members, and providing brief interventions that help clients achieve their vocational preferences and choice).
- Partnership working with Jobcentre Plus and other relevant service providers
- Employment Advisers to work as part of an employment team and to receive on-going training, development and supervision tailored to this specialist area of work

## **6. Service levels**

Each whole time equivalent Employment Adviser should:

- have an active caseload of no more than 25 people at any one time
- Provide a monitoring and support service (where appropriate), for an additional 10 individuals employed within Permitted Work conditions
- Provide a service to no less than 50 and no more than 75 individuals over the course of a year
- Provide expert advice and support to all Care Co-ordinators within their team.

## **7. Partnership**

The service will take a partnership approach with other local agencies to provide a high quality of service to its users.

## **8. Staffing**

All vocational staff should have experience of and/or training in:

- IPS model of working
- Health and Safety legislation
- Disability Discrimination Act
- In-work benefits
- Working with employers, i.e., techniques for approaching employers, raising awareness of mental health

Training should be offered on an annual basis to all staff and on an ad hoc basis to cover changes in employment law, benefits etc which might impinge on users of the service.

All vocational staff must be CRB checked.

All vocational staff should have regular meetings with the Care Co-ordinator and any other team members involved in the individual's care where appropriate. Vocational staff should have input the individual's Care Programme Approach assessments and reviews, as appropriate.

## **9. Quality standards**

- Annual self-assessment against the IPS fidelity scale and the development of an action plan in relation to areas of development is required.
- Quality Assurance (QA) procedures will be in place and will reflect performance against contract and regular assessment by service users and carers.
- QA procedures will reflect progress measured against individual service user's identified needs and vocational goals
- QA procedures will include regular, minuted supervision meetings between the manager and staff.
- Service providers will regularly check and update their policies on: (this list is not exhaustive)
  - Equal Opportunities for service users and staff
  - Health and Safety
  - Confidentiality
  - Involvement of service users in planning and delivery of services
  - Service users' rights
  - Staff induction

## **Monitoring service users' views**

A 6 monthly survey of service user views should be carried out. Questions asked should cover the following areas:

- Have you had the opportunity to formulate your vocational goals in the form of an individual development plan?
- When was your individual development plan last reviewed/updated?
- Have you been assigned a named Employment Adviser?
- Have you received support from an Employment Adviser to work towards achieving your goals?
- Have you achieved any of these goals?
- Have you been treated with respect by staff?
- Have you had information and expert advice about benefits?
- Have you been made aware of the Community Links service?
- Have you been asked about how the service has impacted on your life?
- Have you experienced improved quality of life, confidence or self-esteem?
- Do you have an increased ability to manage your mental distress?
- Have you been asked for suggestions for improvement of the service?
- Have you had opportunities to become involved in the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the service?

The surveys must be evaluated and outcomes made available to service users.

## **10. Performance indicators**

- Number of people supported to access and sustain paid employment
- Profile of employment secured (i.e. f/time, p/time, permitted earnings, self employment etc)
- 30% of service users to have accessed paid employment in competitive settings or self employment
- 50% of service users who have moved into employment to have retained employment at 3/6 months
- Number of people supported to access and sustain work experience placements
- Number of employed individuals who were at risk of losing their job supported to retain employment
- 50% of this group to retain their employment
- Number of people supported to access and sustain mainstream education and training programmes
- Number of people attaining educational or vocational qualifications
- Number of people supported to access and sustain volunteering placements within mainstream agencies

- 50% of service users entering vocational training, voluntary work, work experience or other activity that helps them move towards employment
- Number of people supported to access other specialist vocational services (e.g. New Deal for Disabled People, Access to Work, Work Step)
- Employment Adviser attends a minimum of twice monthly referral / allocation meetings at community team
- Employment Advisor has a minimum of weekly contact with the clinical vocational lead within the community team
- Employment Adviser referrals represent over 50% of team caseload
- Number of employers contacted by Employment Adviser in last month
- Number of people involved in service planning, delivery, monitoring and review
- Service user profile: age, gender, ethnicity, length of time using service, needs profile (i.e. social support, housing, training, vocational).
- Evidence of joint working with other mental health service and mainstream employment providers

## **11. Review and evaluation**

- Quarterly or 6-monthly written reports from the service provider to the commissioner
- Production of any documents, policies or procedures as required by the commissioner.