

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Overall Approach

This consultation reflects a continuation and development of the Scottish Government's current approach for mental health. There is a general consensus that

the broad direction is right but **we want to consult on:**

- The overall structure of the Strategy, which has been organised under 14 broad outcomes and whether these are the right outcomes;
- Whether there are any gaps in the key challenges identified;

- In addition to existing work, what further actions should be prioritised to help us to meet these challenges.

Comments

Overall Approach

I feel the overall approach for this strategy is to be commended and the 14 targets are indeed important areas to be tackled. The focus on keeping people well, early intervention and reducing the stigma of mental health issues are important. I wonder whether you would also consider the role of work or at least valuing everyday activity as another important outcome. Research evidence shows that having work or purposeful activity leads to better mental health and subsequently less use of mental health services. A work related outcome would link to a number of areas such as self management, recovery, reducing stigma and discrimination and promoting the person centred approach that we know is important. We all need purpose and structure in our lives and those with mental health issues are no different from this. For too long (and sadly it is often still the case) people with severe and enduring mental health issues have been given the message that work is not an option for them with very little emphasis or time spent by health professionals and partner organisations looking at work. Is there anything that your document could do to get the message across and dispel the myth that people with mental health or even forensic mental health issues cannot or do not wish to engage in work? There is now clear evidence on the best way to deliver vocational rehabilitation within mental health. There is a lot of work going on in the States and Canada and with national demonstration sites led by the Centre for Mental Health in England. I feel there is more that could be done in Scotland and your Mental Health Strategy would be a really valuable opportunity to get the messages out there and some joined up thinking happening across services in Scotland. I feel I could write much more about this and I have conducted a piece of work reviewing vocational rehabilitation in Scotland and spoken to service users on what works for them. I would be happy to provide you with any additional information if you are interested please just get in touch jean.mcqueen@nhs.net

Question 4 What further action can we take to continue to reduce the stigma of mental ill health and to reduce discrimination?

One action that maybe of interest is the integration of those with severe and enduring mental health issues into mainstream employment. A step many with mental health issues would welcome. Traditionally many health services have provided supported workshops where those with mental health were given work opportunities in a segregated environment. Whilst these were good to provide structure to day and reduced hospital readmissions they also led to stigmatisation and were unlikely to help people move forward and in effect they became stuck in these environments and labelled as someone with a mental health issue. Some health boards still have these outdated practices which are not in line with current evidence i.e. Individual Placement Support or IPS model which has been shown to have far superior outcomes for service users. You mention in your report re-design of services and indeed this is one area that services could be re-designed using existing resources. But would perhaps require some guidance or support from government level to enable this to happen uniformly and focus on real outcomes for service users. Work should be an

important outcome of good quality mental health interventions yet when asked few service users say that mental health professionals ask about work presently.