

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Directorate of Forensic Mental Health and Learning Disabilities

Background

The Forensic Directorate provides specialist services for adults with mental health problems who may pose a risk to themselves or others, or have been in contact with the criminal justice system as a result of offending behaviour. Services are provided in a variety of settings dependent on the individuals need, this includes medium and low secure units and working with people in the community.

There is strong evidence that work /employment or engaging in productive occupation can have a positive impact on an individual. This includes their mental health, quality of life and wellbeing, and it can also promote social inclusion.

The Forensic Employability Pathway was developed by the Forensic Directorate for all patients within their care. It was recognised that this population was at a significant disadvantage when accessing jobs and training opportunities. Personal and social barriers as well as issues in relation to stigma, disclosure of history of offending and mental health problems could cause problems when looking to access work or engage in meaningful occupation.

All patients involved in the programme are assessed by the Occupational Therapist using standardised assessments to gain an overview of the patients' occupational functioning. This helps to identify at which stage in the employability pathway the patient is. It is also helps when looking at opportunities for skill development, vocational rehabilitation and qualification attainment appropriate to their needs.

Implementation Challenges

Resources and funding

One challenge is the reduction in community resources. Several resources the service had previously used have now closed. This has resulted in limited options for resources that will assist with skill development and employability some services require Self Directed Support (SDS) for patients to fund attendance at placements. In-patients do not receive SDS so this reduces the number of available community resources further.

Some vocational and interest qualifications require funding and are no longer available for fee waivers. This can be a challenge to then fund.

Stigma

Partnership between the team and the community organisations are vital. There can often be a stigma attached to mental health problems and to those who have committed offences. Disclosure about mental health problems and criminal offences

can be a challenge for the forensic patient group. To assist with challenging this stigma and supporting resources to work effectively with the patient group, the team have developed forensic awareness events.

Implementation Facilitators

Promoting equalities

The forensic employability pathway is accessible to all patients and can be part of their recovery journey.

To aid equality for all, the employability pathway is tailored to the needs of the individual. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is available to ethnic minorities who have limited or no English language. Training on literacy and numeracy is available to patients where needed. For those who require it, pictorial information can be provided rather than written. There are also separate gender activities to give choice to patients.

There is joint partnership working with education facilities such as Glasgow City College and Rosemount College to help patients gain adult literacy and numeracy skills, further their education and achieve qualifications.

Developments have been made within the in-patient services to provide volunteer activities. These developments include the patient-led unit café. This has provided opportunities for patients to apply for the role, go through an interview and carry out necessary training such as food and hygiene and customer service. This experience can then be included in their CV. Similar developments include the healthy tuck shop within low secure services, and there will soon be a similar process to recruit for the in-house library.

Each community resource has an organisational link Occupational Therapist who maintains contact with the resource to ensure they are supported in taking the patient group and to address any issues.

The team have developed Forensic Awareness Events inviting existing and new community, third and voluntary sector organisations who work with their patient group. These one-day events promote awareness and understanding of forensic mental health and supports services in providing patients the opportunities to work with them.

Use of modern technologies

There is an up to date database with all community resources that the service has established links with which patients are then supported to attend.

The service is currently piloting using iPads and tablets with patients. This is so patients can gain confidence in using every day touch screen technology and to develop their IT skills.

Evaluation

The pathway and community resources database is audited and reviewed annually to analyse how many patients are accessing different resources within each stage. Following a recent review of the employment pathway stages, a stage 5 was added as some patients had successfully gained paid employment.

Patients' mental health, wellbeing and occupational functioning are measured using standardised assessments. Patient feedback is gained using a variety of methods including emotional touchpoints.

Funding is applied for to cover activities which help patients gain confidence and skills. Patients are supported by staff to undertake activities until they are able to withdraw and the patients then organise and attend the groups themselves.

Learning

- To take time in understanding the patients' needs and interests – it has to be meaningful activities and skills development to maintain engagement through the pathway.
- Continuously review and audit the pathway to ensure we are offering all opportunities that we can for the patient group.
- Review patients progress and aspirations with them regularly
- Ensure new policies are linked in the service so the service is current
- Due to a reduction in community organisations, it needs to be creative on how patients can be supported to gain skills.
- To keep in mind that not everyone will be able to or wants to do paid work, however most want to and can be engaged in meaningful activities that use their skills.

Next steps

- Potential future work with 'see me' campaign to help de-stigmatise forensic mental health.
- To look into the possibility of introducing peer support work.
- To look at the potential of A Local Information System for Scotland (ALISS) and Ginsberg technologies being used with the patient group as part of the pathway.
- To look at providing training on internet safety for the patient group.

Contact

Cheryl McMorris

Cheryl.McMorris@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Catherine Totten

Catherine.Totten@ggc.scot.nhs.uk