

Well Connected At Levensgrove (Horticulture Service) Work Connect, Specialist Supported Employment Service

Background

The Well Connected service aims to develop and deliver a range of meaningful activities and non-clinical structured employability interventions for groups of people with:

- severe and enduring mental health issues
- learning disabilities
- autism
- addictions.

By working in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council Greenspace Land Services Department (WDCHCP), individuals are encouraged to see themselves as gardeners rather than clients. Funding and maintenance of the asset is provided by Greenspace, whilst WDCHCP contribute the staff and associated costs. Mental Health client's referrals are received by Community Mental Health Team, Primary Care Mental Health Team and Department for Work and Pensions Disability advisors.

On receipt of the referral, clients are offered an informal appointment by a Rehab/Employability Co-ordinator (Mental Health) who assesses the suitability of the service for the individual. A Sainsbury Risk Assessment, included within Single Shared Assessment is also required. This initial appointment offers an opportunity to explore and discuss with the client, benefits to be gained from employment. Furthermore it will identify client's strengths and support needs.

On engagement the client is allocated a Gardening Employment Support worker who will actively encourage and support them to participate in the programme, working with the client to engage in gardening teams, and work individually.

Regular review, monitoring and reflection is offered as part of the programme. This ensures that the client is participative in self management activities and engagement and that progression happens in a positive direction.

It has to be noted that attendance is very high with little or no non-attendance over a 3-6 month period for most clients. Progress is recorded and next steps are discussed in conjunction with the client to assist them in gaining, and maintaining recovery, confidence and skills.

Strong partnership working

Values and principles in partnership working are applied in all areas, particularly in communication between the services.

Integral to the success of the programme is the partnerships created with the clients. By increasing their capacity, they are enabled to contribute to the growth and development of the programme.

Planned discharge is negotiated between the client and employment support workers, recapping activity, skills gained progress towards either volunteering or employment. Where appropriate, in work support will be provided.

Workforce development

In-house specific training on mental health illness is provided. External training and continued personal development is encouraged for all staff, currently “Be the Best” Workforce Program is being promoted and recently Well Connected staff were nominated in West Dunbartonshire Council Employee Recognition Awards for going ‘above and beyond’ with” their infectious enthusiasm” to deliver and develop ‘Well Connected’ at Levensgrove.

Promoting equalities

We worked recently with the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Equalities programme manager to highlight areas of good practice and identify any gaps in service.

Work will be undertaken and training will be arranged for staff to ensure high standards continue and that the programme is inclusive and offers accessible service to people with protected characteristics. This has helped to reduce any unintentional discrimination.

Outcomes

- Improve Functioning (assessment)
- Improved Interpersonal Skills (assessment)
- Meaningful Structured Engagement leading to Recovery and Wellbeing (Care Plan)
- Paid Employment/SQANQ attainment (recorded)
- Successful achievements by clients enable ideas for further developments (Care Plan)

Key learning

- Approach has to be client-led, user involvement important (value their participation) in order for service to be meaningful.
- Evidence & Knowledge built through six monthly mapping, open days, site visits and presentation.
- Clients buy-in to the programme easily-they report feeling valued, supported and have an opportunity to be part of something that is creative and unique.
- Energetic, enthusiastic, proactive service (staff) who have found various funding options through economically challenging times.

- The Head of Service for Mental Health, Addictions and Learning Disabilities has been key in the development of programme and has strongly supported the service.
- Ensured people receive the appropriate support through assessment, continuous monitor and regular reviews, 1:1 support as required and natural peer support in the workplace.

Contact

Ingram Wilson, Riverview Resource Centre

Ingram.Wilson@ggc.scot.nhs.uk