

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.

Consultation response from the Scottish Union of Supported Employment January 2012.

Introduction

The below responds to the three issues identified above-

- The structure of the Strategy,
- The gaps in the key challenges identified,
- actions to meet challenges,

and the two Improvement Challenges -

- National level action required to support local areas implementation changes,
 - changes that will deliver better outcomes,
- with a focus on employability.

Background

- The Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE) is an umbrella organisation for supported employment providers working with people with disabilities.
SUSE has members that work exclusively with people with mental health conditions, and other members who provide service for people with a range of barriers to work, which may include poor mental health.
SUSE's vision is of people currently disadvantaged in the labour market achieving equal opportunities to access paid employment.
- A large percentage of people who are claiming disability related out of work benefits - Incapacity Benefit (IB), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)- are people who have a mental health condition. In May 2010, 30% of IB/SDA/ESA claimants primary impairment was a mental health condition (Sayce, L. "Getting in, staying in, getting on"

June 2011). We know that unemployment negatively affects health and that people who may initially claim out of work benefits for physical health conditions can experience declines in mental health.

- This makes a strong argument for improving and supporting services that provide appropriate employability support for people with mental health conditions. SUSE considers this is a matter for health policy as well as employability policy.

The Structure of the Strategy

- We feel that the context of the strategy should be widened to include some analysis of the current economic conditions and how these impact on Scotland's mental health, including through increases in redundancies and unemployment.
- We appreciate that the Forward highlights the breadth of services that are needed to promote good mental health and support people with mental illness: those "delivered by the NHS, local authorities, the third and private sectors".

However, the four priority areas do not seem to bear out the importance of mental health being everyone's business, and seem orientated to the NHS and the identification, care and treatment of illness.

The Gaps in the Strategy

- We agree that services need to become more person-centred, safe and effective (p4), but we feel that more could be said on how this will be achieved.
- Inequalities are not given significant attention in the strategy: both the inequalities experienced by people with mental health conditions and the effect of inequality on mental health. In particular the inequality that people with serious mental illness face in terms of employment is not acknowledged: with less than 15% being in employment (Statistic from Labour Force Survey 2010 in Sayce, 2011)
- In terms of effective services, we consider supported employment to be effective - cost effective, effective in delivering employment outcomes; recovery outcomes and reducing the use of health and social care services. It is person centred. This fits in with the policy emphasis on personalisation.
- There is strong evidence that a particular employment model works for people with serious mental health conditions - Individual Placement and Support, or Evidence-Based Supported Employment (EBSE)¹. It is very similar to generic supported employment advocated in Scotland through the Framework for Supported Employment (Scottish Government, COSLA Feb 2010), although EBSE specifically targets people with mental issues and

¹ Burns, T. *et al.* (2007) The effectiveness of supported employment for people with severe mental illness: a randomised controlled trial. *The Lancet*, 370, 1146-1152

involves embedding employability specialists within mental health services. (see [IRISS Insight 1](#) and [SUSE Position Paper²](#)).

Additional Actions required

- Actions to promote employment should be in the strategy. These can include developing local joint health and employability services using Scottish supported employment expertise and the EBSE model. These actions could be included in the strategy under outcome 6 or outcome 5 – “appropriate, evidence-based care and treatment for mental illness is available”.

National Level Action required to support local level implementation challenges.

- SUSE would like the Health Division to put more emphasis on promoting employment as an effective intervention for mental health improvement and for supporting recovery. SUSE would like to see Mental Health work more closely with the employability and tackling poverty sections of Government, increasingly joining up the strategies of both.
- In December 2009, the Department of Work and Pensions published “the Perkins Review” – Realising Ambitions – which outlined the case for increasing employability support for people with mental health conditions and the model of more support required. To our knowledge, Scotland has not specifically taken forward actions recommended in this document. The Perkins review made it clear that mainstream employability support (funded by DWP) is seldom appropriate for people with more serious mental health conditions, who can and want to work. This is reflected locally by SUSE members who bear witness to the fact that many people with mental illness require more intensive, person-centred support than the DWP funded programmes can provide.

Changes that will deliver better outcomes

- The evidence says that changing existing employability services for people with mental health conditions, such as those currently funded by local NHS Boards, to the EBSE approach will result in better value for money and contribute to tackling the great inequality in employment that people with mental health conditions face.
- There are examples of the third sector and NHS services taking an interest in EBSE in Scotland, and going ahead to develop appropriate employability support for people with mental health issues. The EBSE Fidelity Scale has been developed and tested to determine the fidelity of services to the principles of EBSE, which determines the employment outcomes achieved³. It has successfully been used in Scotland, by SUSE and two of its members. The

² “**Evidence Based Supported Employment** – using international learning and research in the implementation of The Supported Employment Framework for Scotland.” Available on www.susescotland.co.uk

³ Shepherd G. *et al.* (2009) *Measuring what matters. Key indicators for the development of evidence-based employment services*, Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (www.scmh.org.uk)

Bond G.R. *et al.* (1997) A fidelity scale for the Individual Placement and Support model of supported employment. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 31, 280-289.

EBSE Fidelity Scale could be used as a development tool, in a way similar to the Scottish Recovery Indicator, to support local areas, commissioners and practitioners to change services.

- Arguably at Health Board level a strategic change is required to recognise the importance of employment and local good practice in supported employment (currently often provided outside of the NHS, and sometimes outside the mental health system).
- Alongside this, there remains the challenge of developing the public sector in Scotland as exemplar employers, developing mental healthy workplaces. This can be done by taking forward commitments previously made in *Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland*. Mentally healthy workplaces will benefit employees with disabilities, included supported employees, as well as the general workforce.

Conclusion

SUSE contends that the strategy misses a key opportunity to take forward evidence based action around promoting employment opportunities for people affected by severe mental illness. The strategy misses an opportunity to analyse the recommendations in "Realising Ambitions" and how they may be enacted in Scotland.

More could be said and done to link the Strategy to other Scottish Government policies such as the Supported Employment Framework for Scotland and the Review of The Future of Public Services, by the Christie Commission.



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