

Evolve – A Navigator Service



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Background to the Project:

- The Mental Health Long Term Conditions Project 'Evolve' was originally commissioned in April 2012. It was developed from an earlier primary care community bridge building service which had been in operation since April 2010.
- Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust commissioned CREST to develop a 'Navigators Service' to support adult service users with a serious mental illness (SMI) in their discharge from secondary to primary care.
- 'Evolve' is part of CREST, a local voluntary sector charity in Waltham Forest and was commissioned to provide 4 navigators and a team leader in April 2012 by Waltham Forest Clinical Commissioning Group for the annual sum of £187,000.

Case for Change:

- Life expectancy of people with SMI is 15 to 20 years less than the general population, mortality rates are 2-3 times higher than the general population;
- Many of the early deaths are caused by preventable illness such as cardiovascular disease (CVD);
- People with SMI are at higher risk of physical ill health and hospitalisations ;
- Primary care plays a central role in the provision of care for people with SMI.

The Solution:

Working with a designated navigator for a period of 12-18 months, clients attend 3 to 4 20-minute appointments where GPs and practice nurses monitor their mental and physical health. Taking a person-centred recovery focus builds a solid and trusting relationship between the client and navigator and enables the navigator to detect early signs of crisis and prevent relapse.

During periods of crisis clients have increased contact with their navigator and GP; for those needing specialist input protocols for re-referral to secondary care have been developed. Where the discharge period is within 6 months the navigator makes a direct referral to the respective clinic for an urgent outpatient appointment. Navigators also encourage clients to complete a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) as part of their recovery.

Resources required:

- Team leader and 4 full-time navigators
- Installation of a shared drive
- 10x 2 hour weekly education workshops for GPs and staff on mental illness, including psychotropic medication protocols
- GPs are paid £200 per client for undertaking 3 to 4 20-minute assessments including a discharge meeting

Aims:

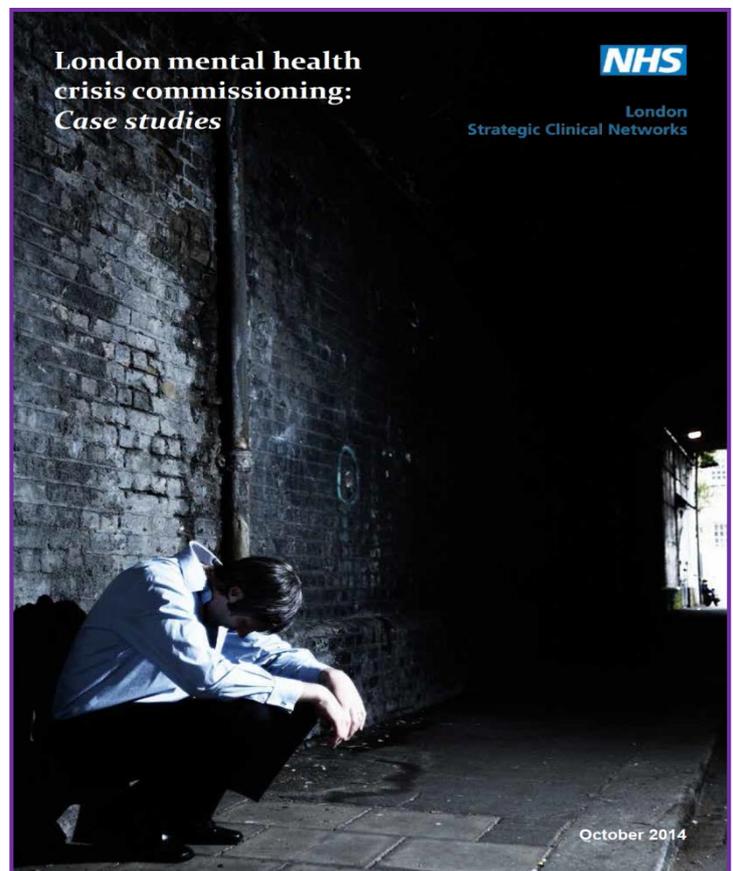
- Support adult service users with a serious mental illness in their discharge from secondary to primary care;
- Ensure service users attend appointments - GPs/practice nurses to monitor mental and physical health;
- Using a person-centred recovery focus, support clients to reduce any social isolation they may be experiencing by increasing access to a variety of local opportunities/services.

Impact:

The project was featured in *London mental health crisis commissioning: Case studies* as a good example.

Expertise and commitment of the Evolve team has contributed to:

- A reduction in acute hospital admissions
- A reduction in clients attending ED in favour of seeing their GP first
- A reduction in GP's re-referring clients back to the Access and Assessment Team
- A reduction in time spent back in secondary care if a client has required input/re-referral
- A reduction in stigma associated with receiving a depot injection at a mental health venue through clients accessing a practice nurse alongside other patients with no mental illness



Lessons Learnt :

Commissioners could benefit from establishing regular dialogue between primary and secondary care practitioners to ensure effective management of these clients in the community and reduce risks of mental health crisis.