

Referral to non-statutory vocational services:
factors mental health professionals consider.

Avon and Wiltshire Mental
Health Partnership NHS Trust



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**What does your vocation mean
to you?**

TRIGGER QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What does your own choice of vocation mean to you?
- How do you feel about your work role compared to the other occupations in your life?
- How would you feel if you were not able to 'work' or pursue your current vocation?
- How would you spend your time?



What is appropriate employment?

Vocational assessments


Consider

What do you want to know?


What do you need to know?

Why?





- What are 'interventions' that support service users into work, education, training, employment and meaningful occupation? CSIP 2006




Referral to non-statutory vocational services:

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Consider

- Do Occupational therapists have specific skills when making referrals to vocational services?
- What are the roles of other professionals in understanding service users vocational needs and supporting to meet their vocational aspirations?




Background

Work and meaningful occupation are identified within national guidance as essential to recovery (Department of Health 2009).

UK policy emphasises collaborative partnerships across services in order to meet service users vocational needs (Care Services Improvement Partnership 2006, Perkins et al 2009, H M Government 2009, Boardman and Parsonage 2007).

Despite the evolution of the evidence base surrounding vocation and severe mental illness and the development of national guidelines there are still some gaps in understand exactly how best to meet service users' vocational needs (Department of Health 2003, Kirsh et al 2005, Floyd et al 2004, Schneider et al 2002, Boardman et al 2003, Schneider 2005, The Sesami Research Team & Practice Partnership 2007).

Aims of the study



- **To understand the factors taken into account by mental health professionals when making referrals to non-statutory vocational services on behalf of service users.**
- To describe the information that mental health professionals believe should be communicated to the non-statutory vocational services in order to support service users into vocation.
- **To explore the referral process.**

Ethical considerations



- The research proposal was reviewed by Brunel University Research Ethics Committee
- Swindon Local Research Ethics Committee
- Ethical approval to proceed by both committees was granted and approval to proceed was subsequently obtained from Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust Research and Development Department.

Design



- A qualitative methodology based on the ontological approach of 'subtle realism' (Snape and Spencer 2003, Hammersley 1992).
- The research aims were generated by deductive enquiry through a review of the literature.

Method



- Purposive sampling to capture diversity within the sample population; ten participants were recruited, a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, community psychiatric nurses, and occupational therapists.
- In-depth interviews as the method of data collection.
- The data analysis followed the framework method of analysis.
- Reflexivity and multiple coding to ensure the trustworthiness of the data analysis and conclusions.
- An audit trail was kept throughout the research process.

Findings: Referrals

Reasons for referral

- service users choice was a key factor in the referral process identified by all participants.
- activity/occupation for service users
- managing mental health
- to increase motivation and confidence
- 'stepping stone' towards other occupations
- social reasons.

Reasons for not referring

- service-user not wanting a referral
- being too unwell
- or lack of appropriate resources to meet service users needs

Factors considered by mental health professionals

SERVICE USER RELATED

- What service users are doing with their time
- What they have done with their time in the past and want to do in the future
- Service users choice, interest and preference
- Service users mental health (past, present and future)
- Level of support required
- Service users functioning, skills, abilities and motivation
- Transport
- Readiness
- Timing, when to refer
- Risks
- Other interventions required

Factors considered by mental health professionals

NON-STATUTORY VOCATIONAL SERVICE RELATED

- Which of the services
- Benefits for the vocational service
- Others attending
- Geographical Location
- Level of support available
- Knowledge of the vocational services

How factors were considered by mental health professionals

- CPA/Core Assessment
- CPA review
- Rapport and knowing the service user
- Discussion with service user
- Assessment of service user e.g. mental state
- Observation via activity/Occupational Therapy Assessment
- Discussion within Multidisciplinary Team/ with colleagues
- Assessment by another professional
- Service user visiting vocational service
- Discussion with the vocational service
- Experience and beliefs about the vocational service

Participant roles and interventions

Interventions provided by mental health professionals

- Psychological intervention
- Interventions to improve independence and skills
- Practical Assistance
- Goal setting

Roles of mental health professionals

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourager • Educator • Advisor • Developer • Preparer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporter • Initiator • Communicator • Problem solver |
|--|--|

Participants roles

Participant details	Encourager	Educator	Advisor	Developer	Preparer	Supporter	Initiator	Communicator	Problem solver
No. 1 Lucy Psychologist CMHT									
No. 2 Brian Psychologist CMHT									
No. 3 Jane OT ADT									
No. 4 Bill CPN CMHT									
No. 5 Amy OT CMHT									
No. 6 Nicola CPN CMHT									
No. 7 Alice OT CMHT									
No. 8 Heather OT CMHT									
No. 9 Joan Social Worker CMHT									
No. 10 Lisa CPN ADT									

 indicates role

Interventions used by participants

Participant details	Psychological interventions	Interventions to improve independence and skills	Practical assistance	Goal setting
No. 1 Lucy Psychologist CMHT				
No. 2 Brian Psychologist CMHT				
No. 3 Jane OT ADT				
No. 4 Bill CPN CMHT				
No. 5 Amy OT CMHT				
No. 6 Nicola CPN CMHT				
No. 7 Alice OT CMHT				
No. 8 Heather OT CMHT				
No. 9 Joan Social Worker CMHT				
No. 10 Lisa CPN ADT				

 indicates use of intervention

Characteristics of referrers who refer to the greatest number of non-statutory vocational services

Participants who referred to at least four different non-statutory vocational services.

Provided the widest range of interventions (interventions to improve independence and skills, practical assistance, and goal setting).

Described the broadest number of roles which included the unique combination of advisor, developer and preparer in addition to those generic to the other participants.

Communicated additional information to the referral form to the non statutory vocational service and placed the onus on both themselves and the service user, information judged to be relevant depending on service users needs and emphasised ongoing communication with the non-statutory vocational service whilst the service user was on their case load.

These participants also assessed service users via observation during activity and occupational therapy assessments.

Gaps in service provision

Gaps were identified in relation to opportunities for service users unable to progress beyond sheltered work; participants indicated that when these service users were discharged from projects they then had no vocation.

Gaps were also identified in relation to support for service users to gain work and employment. This perhaps indicated the broad and varying vocational needs of service users and a wish for more vocational options to be available.

Factors which influence referral to non-statutory vocational services by mental health professionals

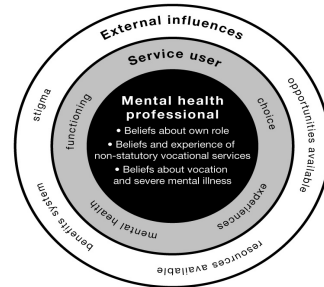
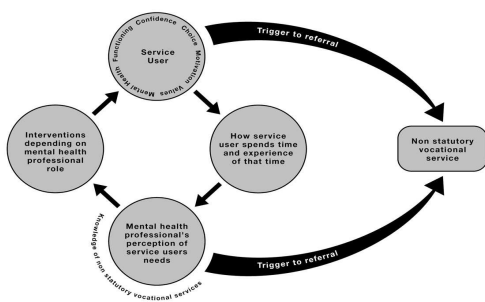


Figure 2: The relationship between the service user, mental health professional role and the trigger to referral.



Discussion

- Despite national guidelines emphasising the importance of getting those with severe mental illness into work and employment, this did not appear to be the predominate reason for referral.
- Service user choice was identified as a crucial component both by the participants and elsewhere in the literature. All of the participants described the importance of service users having 'something to do' with an emphasis on 'meaningful activity' as well as 'vocation'.
- Links between participation in something and self identity were made by participants, reflective of the literature. New findings emerged regarding the factors considered when making referrals on behalf of service users.



The **CPA (Care Plan Approach)** process is the nationally established pathway for identifying service users occupational needs and how these are to be met. However surprisingly only a few participants identified this as a time to explore such issues.

The findings indicate a complex interplay between service user choice, motivation, confidence, values, mental health and functioning also participants' perceptions of their role, and their own knowledge of non-statutory vocational services in making referral (figure 2).

New insights were gained in relation to influences on referrals and participants perception of their role during the referral process.

Implications:



Several elements emerged as key during the referral process.

The influence of the relationship with, and knowledge of the non-statutory vocational services; the different interventions which may occur depending on the perception of the service users need and the mental health professional perception of their role.

Through identifying these aspects decisions can be made regarding the parts of the process that be utilised to more effectively meet individual service users needs during the referral process.

The findings provide support for the department of health guidance on commissioning vocational services in relation to having a 'clinical vocational lead'; a dedicated member of the Community Mental Health Team with a specific focus on meeting service users vocational needs.

The findings indicate



The 'clinical vocational lead'

- Should be able to make links with the non-statutory vocational services.
- Provide advice on matching service users choice, skills, abilities and functioning to the most appropriate non-statutory vocational service.
- Service users should be offered the opportunity for assessment via meaningful activity to facilitate this matching process.
- Service users should be offered the opportunity for individualised advice and provision of the interventions. This may facilitate assisting service users to both choose to and meet their vocational needs and aspirations through developing their skills and independence.

Do Occupational therapists have specific skills when making referrals to vocational services?.....

Limitations



The limitations of the study are in relation to generalisation to all mental health professionals elsewhere.

The findings do provide a foundation on which to explore this area further elsewhere.



Within our teams how can


we work in close partnerships

to improve outcome.....

What should we be offering **service users**

In order to best assess and meet vocational and occupational needs?

What are the skills within our teams, are there any gaps in resources?



Wiltshire Early Intervention in Psychosis Service

Dedicated time to vocation.

Occupational Therapist offers vocational assessment

3 Community Mental Health Workers work across Wiltshire with young people experiencing their first episode of psychosis.

Individually tailored support.

Recording of outcomes (24.6% in employment, 43% in Education). Audit of Year one outcomes currently underway.



Wiltshire Vocational Network


Wiltshire Vocational Network - linkage with other agencies to improve communication/ partnership, awareness of roles/ share knowledge/skills; and improve practise across both city and rural areas.

Set up March 2009

Work Psychologist (DWP)

Vocational Leads - Occupational Therapists (from Inpatient, Community Mental Health Teams, Crisis and Home Treatment, Early Intervention AWP)

Employment Advisors (Richmond Fellowship Wiltshire and Swindon Employment Service).



Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.

Vocational Strategy currently being developed, lead by Katherine Godfrey – Head of Profession, Occupational Therapy .



Questions

- Do Occupational therapists have specific skills when making referrals to vocational services?
- How can partnerships improve vocational outcome for service users?
- Consider the role of the psychiatrist in job retention and timely intervention.



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Stuart Donaldson – Work Psychologist, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Department of Work and Pensions. Richmond Fellowship Employment and Training Wiltshire.



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ABSTRACT

Introduction:

Work and meaningful occupation are identified within national guidance as essential to recovery (Department of Health 2009). UK policy emphasises collaborative partnerships across services in order to meet service users' vocational needs (Care Services Improvement Partnership 2006, Perkins et al 2009, H M Government 2009). Little is known about the interplay between the statutory and non-statutory sectors. The purpose of this study was to consider the process and practice mental health professionals engage in when making referrals to non-statutory vocational services on behalf of service users with whom they are working.

Method:

In depth interviews using a topic guide were conducted with ten mental health professionals. Each interview was audio taped, transcribed verbatim and analysed using the framework method (Ritchie et al 2003). An audit trail, reflexivity and multiple coding were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data analysis and conclusions.


Results:

The findings provide insight into what factors mental health professionals consider relevant when making referrals to non-statutory services. Seventeen different factors were identified related to the service user and non-statutory vocational services. The findings indicate a complex interplay between service user choice, participants' perceptions of their role, their perceptions of service users' needs and their own knowledge of non-statutory vocational services.


Discussion:

The findings provide support to the occupational therapy profession in promoting its role through the specialist skills used in assessing service users' vocational skills and function through activity. The findings further suggest occupational therapists have a role in providing advice and interventions to facilitate service users in meeting their vocational aspirations. The findings also describe the role of other mental health professionals such as the psychiatrist in educating, encouraging, supporting and initiating service users on their pathway to vocational recovery.


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QUESTIONS



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