

Case Example 7:

Brain Injury Case Management (Dudley)

Type of organization: Joint local authority and Primary Care Trust case management team.

User group: People with acquired brain injury.

Client numbers and location: Currently a caseload of 88 clients (some of whom are on review rather than being actively supported by the team).

Staffing: Two Case Managers (one full-time, one part-time), and one full-time assistant.

Services: Support provided directly by the team consists of: case management; psychological therapy/emotional support; strategies and memory aids for home management and day-to-day living; and carer support.

The team also arranges direct support from an independent agency with support workers who are specifically trained to work with people with acquired brain injury.

Funding: Jointly funded by the local authority (70 per cent) and the Primary Care Trust (30 per cent).

Case Managers can buy up to 156 hours per week of dedicated brain injury support from the independent agency using a ring-fenced social services budget (comes under rehabilitation and prevention, so is separate from personal budgets and not dependent on meeting critical or substantial FACs criteria).

Evaluation

This service has not been externally evaluated. Outcomes have been measured internally, using various tools including a community outcomes score developed specifically for people with brain injury by Warwick University.

Features of Good Practice

Meeting practical, emotional and social needs

Assessments are holistic, looking at people's physical needs, social and family situation, housing, and benefits, as well as what they might like to do. Case Managers meet clients to talk about their needs, what is important to them, and what they want to address. Clients and Case Managers then work together to devise individual plans, and work towards these goals, often with direct input from support workers.

Case Managers help with whatever areas of life a person needs support with. They work with employment and vocational services, and cover leisure and social activities. They can help with access to benefits, some psychological/emotional support, day-to-day support, and support for carers.

Key workers and coordination

Clients are allocated a named Case Manager for as long as they need it. Case Managers help clients to come up with individual support plans and have monthly overview meetings with the support agency to ensure that they are working effectively with the client towards meeting their goals. They also liaise with a range of other services and professionals to help clients to access interventions and assessments from other disciplines, and provide support and advocacy if clients struggle with mainstream services, for example banks, benefit agencies and employment services.

Case Managers can support people right through their journey from hospital through to returning to work, a process which may take years. The service is under no pressure to discharge people, so clients can return and ask for support at any time. This gives them continuity and confidence, and avoids them having to explain their needs each time they contact a service.

The case management service does not duplicate existing services. The support that Case Managers (and the support workers they commission) provide is additional to any support package put in place through personal budgets, the focus being more on working towards goals than day-to-day care. All clients have a keyworker with the support agency, and they usually also have at least one other person in the organisation that they know in case the keyworker is not available. Staff who do not know a client will shadow someone who does, so clients will never be supported solely by a worker they have not met before.

Specialist expertise

Case Managers are specialists in brain injury and have a good knowledge of all local resources. A big part of their role is raising awareness about the needs of people with brain injury (for example, within the court system) and providing training to other organisations working with people with brain injury.

Further Information

For more information please contact the Dudley Acquired Brain Injury Service on 01384 323151 or visit www.dudleycs.nhs.uk