

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON ADULT CARE, HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – 7th SEPTEMBER 2005**

**Services to adults at the interface of mental health
and drugs misuse**

This report sets out the potential value, scope and methodology of a review examining what is offered to adults in the Royal Borough at the interface of mental health and drugs misuse.

1. Background

- 1.1 According to the Department of Health, supporting someone with a mental health illness and substance misuse problems is one of the biggest challenges facing front line mental health services. The complexity of issues makes diagnosis, care and treatment more difficult with service users being at higher risk of relapse, readmission to hospital and suicide.
- 1.2 Community Mental health Services are managed by Central and North West London (CNWL) Mental Health Trust and many drug treatment services are provided by CNWL, though the social work team is managed by the Royal Borough. One of the main difficulties is that there are a number of agencies involved in a person's care, with the result that care is fragmented and people can fallthrough the net.
- 1.3 The term "dual diagnosis" is often used to describe people who have both mental health problems and who also misuse drugs or alcohol. It is recognized that people with this combination of problems often have a lot of other difficulties – housing, welfare, legal etc, not to mention the social stigma attached to being mentally ill or being a drug user.

- 1.4 MIND, the national charity campaigning for better mental health, suggest that 30-50% of people with mental health problems also have current drug or alcohol problems while as many as 50-66% of people coming into contact with drug or alcohol treatment services may have some kind of mental health problem.
- 1.5 Substance misuse and mental health problems are generally treated by different services who have different philosophies and therapies. There is a danger that people presenting with mental health problems may have their drugs misuse missed by the services and not get the appropriate treatment or vice versa. Or there may be a dispute between services over what the primary condition is.
- 1.6 Effective services for people with dual diagnosis requires co-ordination of policies and processes, a partnership approach, and shared care arrangements between all the different agencies.

2 The value of a review at this time

- 2.2 There is an increasing awareness of the need to improve the interface between mental health and drugs misuse services. National drivers for change include:
 - Concern about the increasing number of drug users and the effect of drug use on people's mental health
 - The requirements of the National Service Framework for Mental Health to mainstream services to this group within mental health services and to deliver them in an integrated way
 - Equality Impact Assessments which require identifying and responding to any groups that are specifically at risk
- 2.3 A review at this time would serve to increase the profile of this issue and act as a catalyst for action among agencies involved in this area of service delivery.

3. Suggested scope and Terms of Reference

- 3.1 It is proposed that the review should focus on examining how well prepared services are to deliver a mainstreamed, integrated service to people who have both mental health problems and who also misuse drugs.

- 3.2 Specifically the review could look at the extent to which local agencies are working in partnership to
- Identify local patterns of need in order to target services
 - Work to common definitions, policies and procedures in relation to this client group
 - Develop arrangements for co-ordinating services, identifying gaps and developing appropriate provision
 - Adopt a care programme approach
 - Link appropriately with secondary agencies – housing, employment, GPs, Dentists, housing, welfare services, criminal justice agencies

4. Suggested methodology

Members may wish to consider appointing a small subgroup to oversee this review. It is proposed that this could be carried out as a short, sharp review focused on:

- Informing Members about what constitutes good practice in this area of service provision and how local services measure up to models of good practice;
- Bringing the key agencies together in a stakeholder meeting, sponsored by members of the review subgroup, to identify and agree plans for improvement.

5 Conclusion

Members may wish to comment on the potential value, scope and methodology of the review and, if they are minded to agree, to appoint members to the subgroup.

Background papers:

Dual Diagnosis Good Practice Guide, Department of Health, 2002

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4009058&chk=sCQrOr