

YOUR WAY

Executive Summary

An evaluation of a model of community mental health support developed by Together for Mental Wellbeing



Mental Health
Foundation



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In 2010, Together transformed its Day Centre services into personalised, flexible support services based in the community. This new approach is called Your Way. The Mental Health Foundation conducted a three-year evaluation of Your Way.

The Your Way model has five essential elements:

1. Meaningful personalisation.
2. Open-minded approach and high-quality service.
3. Peer support.
4. Healthy living in the community.
5. Service-user leadership.

People can access support from the service via referrals from Community Mental Health Teams (or in some cases through Supporting People panels), their GP or through self-referral. Those with a personal budget can use this to purchase support from the service.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach focused on the following aspects of Your Way:

- Increased mental and physical wellbeing.
- Improvements in functional living skills.
- The achievement of self-directed goals.
- A reduction in mental health hospital bed use.
- Improved service-user experiences.

The key outcomes measured were subjective wellbeing and health-promoting lifestyle activity across a 12-month period in 13 of the Your Way sites.

In addition, the evaluation aimed to assess the cost savings provided by Your Way in relation to comparable support delivery, and between service costs pre- and post- transformation to the model.

Semi-structured interviews using schedules based on the five essential elements were conducted by

peer researchers with service users in five of the Your Way sites.

Findings

Wellbeing

There were statistically significant increases in wellbeing in the first three months of service use for people who enrolled on the evaluation within a month of accessing support from Your Way.

Lifestyle

There were statistically significant improvements in relation to *social life and relationships, a sense of meaning, dealing with health professionals, and health-promoting lifestyle activity* for people who enrolled on the evaluation within a month of accessing Your Way.

Goals

Goals relating to *physical health and wellbeing* were the most frequently identified across the sample at baseline, and were rated 'very important' for the majority of all participants. The highest proportion of participants who completed baseline data within a month of accessing Your Way achieved their goals at the six-month follow-up time point.

The qualitative interviews identified aspects of Your Way, which service users particularly valued. Your Way created a community and social network that improved resilience. The Your Way staff had an open-minded approach and provided a high-quality service. Service users valued peer support, the experience of self-directed support and the use of incremental goal setting to progress recovery.

The costing comparison exercise was used to examine the differences between the cost of Your Way and the statutory cost of comparable levels of service delivery. This exercise highlighted the challenges of costing voluntary sector services and led to a recommendation regarding strategic action to create a framework for costing voluntary sector services.



Case studies in Wandsworth and Southwark illustrate the findings of this exercise.

In Wandsworth, up until 2009–2010, services consisted of traditional day care. 134 clients were supported annually at a cost of over £700,000. A tiny proportion of these people moved on to positive outcomes (three per annum). Following service transformation, more people are supported each year: 165 at a significantly reduced cost (reduced by more than £538,000 per annum). Crucially, a significant majority of these people moved on to more positive outcomes (101 in the year 2013–2014).

Recommendations

The personalised ethos and innovative approach of Your Way poses a substantial challenge to evaluation. The evaluation's five recommendations reflect the following challenges:

- Consequent variation of Your Way in different sites (in response to local needs, eligibility criteria, community characteristics and funding streams).
- External factors such as the changing commissioning environment and the slow implementation of personal budgets.

- 1. Your Way approach:** We recommend that Together continues to learn from the development of this approach both in terms of the operation of the five essential elements and the totality of Your Way using an action research methodology within each site.
- 2. Embedding the Your Way model:** We recommend that Together continues to embed the Your Way approach in ways that reflect funding streams and local differences within each site (including differences in service user profiles, staff backgrounds and skills, and the communities in which services are based).
- 3. Development of an evaluation approach:** We recommend that Together and other service providers continue to develop evaluation approaches to personalised community mental health provision. For

Your Way, this evaluation approach should develop flexibly in order to understand the following: (i) the developmental, 'transformation' and 'embedding' processes; (ii) the longer-term operation with regard to service user leadership and sustainability. Future evaluations should include process and outcome components, and include the perspectives of staff (strategic, service management and front line), peer supporters and service users.

- 4. Cost benefit analysis (CBA):** We recommend that the Department of Health invests in the independent development of a CBA approach for innovative voluntary sector provision in mental health. This will require government funding as it is beyond the resource and remit of individual service providers.
- 5. Personal budgets:** We recommend that the UK Government, service providers, research and representative organisations review the rollout of personal budgets across the country for people with mental health problems, including people who experience episodic ill health. This review should consider the commissioning and (national and local) policy leadership required to develop innovative self-directed support models and services.



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