



Evaluation Report

May 2017

reliable and personalised employment support service

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Introduction to the Report

The Individual, Placement and Support programme (IPS) delivered in partnership between Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and Action Mental Health (AMH) aims to assist people with severe and enduring mental health problems to secure and maintain employment. People who experience severe and enduring mental health problems have one of the lowest employment rates in the UK. Yet the vast majority want to work, and with the right support many people can. Evidence about the benefits of IPS has been collected internationally in response to the aspirations and the rights of people with mental health problems to receive high quality, evidence-based supported employment services.

This evaluation report aims to provide an in-depth summative evaluation of the IPS programme, with a particular focus on the qualitative impacts achieved by programme participants. This section will introduce the programme and provide an overview of programme partners as well as the programme focus, objectives and outcomes.

Introduction to the Programme Partners

The IPS programme is delivered through a partnership which is made up of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and Action Mental Health (AMH). A brief outline of each organisation is presented below:

Action Mental Health - is a local charity which works to enhance the quality of life and the employability of people with mental health needs or a learning disability in Northern Ireland. Founded in 1963 AMH changes the lives of those living with mental ill health and promotes resilience and well-being to future generations. AMH is Northern Ireland's largest voluntary provider of vocational and employment training programmes for people with mental health needs and / or a learning disability.

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust - is the largest integrated health and social care trust in the United Kingdom. The Trust delivers integrated health and social care to approximately 340,000 citizens in Belfast and provides the majority of regional specialist services to all of Northern Ireland. It has an annual budget of £1.1bn and a workforce over 20,000 (full time and part time). Belfast Trust also comprises the major teaching and training hospitals in Northern Ireland. The Belfast Trust provides a range of mental health services in the community, at home and in hospitals using an integrated approach to care which is designed to promote recovery.

The Individual Placement and Support Programme

The Action Mental Health (AMH) / Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Individual Placement Support (IPS) Partnership commenced back in 2011. The programme is commissioned by the Health Trust and AMH's European Social Fund (ESF) programme. Currently there are three IPS Employment Specialists based within the Community Mental Health Teams across Belfast. This IPS programme is designed to support individuals with enduring mental health problems from the Belfast Trust area, to find and remain in work.

Led by the service user, IPS aims to match people to the career options of their choice, reflecting their hopes, aspirations, interests and skills. The Employment Specialist and the Trust's Occupational Therapists (OT), as 'Vocational Champions', work within the clinical team to ensure a team approach to supporting people in employment. The Employment Specialist offers individuals support with compiling a CV, job search, and assistance with application forms and interviews. Expert Social Security Benefits advice is also provided to the individual by signposting to specialist benefits advisors. The Occupational Therapist, as Vocational Champion provides ongoing support with a focus on mental health and wellbeing while supporting individuals in their recovery journey.

The programme is founded on 8 key principles:

- Zero Exclusion
- Competitive employment is the goal
- Specialist integrated within the mental health treatment team
- Rapid Job Search
- Individual Job Preferences
- Employers are approached with the needs of individual in mind (new principle)
- On-going time-unlimited support is provided
- Personalised benefits counselling

Currently, the number of Employment Specialists, who are employed by Action Mental Health, has increased from 2 to 3 from February 2017. The ambition is to grow this service in the future with an Employment Specialist in each of the Community Mental Health Teams.

The Individual Placement and Support Programme (cont'd)

The IPS process or employment pathway is:

1. Service user expresses a wish to work.
2. The Occupational Therapist arranges a meeting between the Employment Specialist, OT and service user during which the service user has the opportunity to make an informed decision and an action plan is agreed (this may require more than one meeting).
3. Through a series of one-to-ones between the Employment Specialist and the service user the following steps are worked through at a pace and frequency defined by the service user:
 - Employment Questionnaire completed;
 - Data monitoring form completed in compliance with funder requirements;
 - Vocational profiling commences;
 - The service user is supported to make an informed decision regarding disclosure and this decision is written into the plan;
 - Development of a CV.
4. Benefits advice will be accessed at an early stage or following initial job search dependent upon the service user's individual circumstances or expressed wishes.
5. Rapid job search by the Employment Specialist and service user begins as soon as vocational profiling is completed. It is recommended that job search begins within 4 weeks to support the service user's motivation regarding employment.
6. Employment Specialist supports the service user through job applications and interviews as agreed by the service user. Other activities during this time may include "better off" calculations or completing permitted work forms.
7. The Employment Specialist provides supports to the service user when in work and, dependent on the disclosure decision of the service user, will provide full support to the employer.
8. Concordant action with the Occupational Therapist if needs are identified.

The Employment Specialists, although based in the Community Mental Health Teams are operationally managed by AMH, which ensures that work planning, supervision and performance appraisal is undertaken in line with AMH practices. The Employment Specialists are line managed by the AMH New Horizons, Service Manager and are an integrated member of the AMH New Horizons staff team. This is an important support structure ensuring effective communications, learning and development and informal supports are available for the Employment Specialist and that the IPS service is integrated with the other services and programmes provided by AMH across the Trust area.

Evaluation Methodology

A dedicated methodology was agreed by AMH and BHSCT steering group and the external evaluator in completing this evaluation assignment. This included the collection and collation of all relevant primary and secondary information utilised throughout the lifetime of the programme delivery. The activity to complete this evaluation included:

- Desktop review of programme information including data collected through AMH and BHSCT sources
- Ongoing direct and indirect engagement with the AMH and BHSCT steering group
- Focus group to engage 20 programme participants in direct face to face discussions
- Online survey developed and issued to all relevant programme participant contacts
- Direct consultation with each of the relevant Employment Specialists (North and South / West Belfast)
- Direct consultation with Occupational Therapists
- Meetings with each of the North and West Multi-Disciplinary Teams
- Meeting with Trustwide Early Intervention team
- Meeting with BHSCT Senior Mental Health Service staff including the Mental Health Service User Consultant, with a responsibility for mental health service provision across the Trust
- Direct consultation with identified carers / families to inform wider benefits to programme participants
- Direct consultation with identified employers to assess impacts from their viewpoint
- Case studies examples of programme impacts across a number of key areas

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

This section outlines the quantitative findings emerging from this evaluation process. This process has evaluated all anticipated outputs of the programme (1st April 2015 to 31st March 2017) in line with projected targets and milestones as agreed between AMH and BHSCT. The evaluation findings sections, has been interspersed with case studies and service user testimonies to demonstrate personal impacts across service users, parents / carers and employers. This reinforces the programme’s direct and indirect benefits.

Total Number of Service Users on Programme Register at 1st April 15

Programme delivery pre-dated this evaluation period. Therefore it is important to ascertain the number of service users registered in the programme at the commencement of the evaluation period. The table below outlines this information and presents it across service user age range and gender.

Age Range	Male	Female	Total
20-24	2	0	2
25 - 49	15	10	25
50-54	2	0	2
55+	3	1	4
Total	22	11	33

- In total, there were **33 service users registered** on the programme and actively receiving support to secure employment.
- **Two thirds of these service users were male (22) with 11 females.**
- The vast majority of service users engaged in the programme were **aged between 25 and 49 (25 or 76%).**

It is important to note that two Employment Specialists were employed with caseloads during this period. Additionally, during this time there was an absence of one Employment Specialist for a period of nine months.

New Referrals Received between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2017

Using the same format as the previous table, the table below outlines the number of service users referred into IPS during this evaluation period (1st April 2015 – 31st March 2017). Again information includes age range and gender demographics.

Age Range	Male	Female	Total
20-24	3	1	4
25 - 49	15	6	21
50-54	1	2	3
55+	1	0	1
Total	20	9	29

- Similarly, the majority of service users engaging in the programme **were males (20 or 69%) and aged between 25 and 49 (21 or 72%).**
- In total, there were **29 service users referred into the programme** in this time period.

Total Service Users Involved in the Programme

Accounting for these two service user groups the following merges the information presented in the previous tables. This thus represents the total number of service users engaged in the programme during the evaluation period of 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2017.

Age Range	Male	Female	Total
20-24	5	1	6
25 - 49	30	16	46
50-54	3	2	5
55+	4	1	5
Total	42	20	62

Total Service Users Involved in the Programme (continued)

- In total, there were **62 service users participating in the programme** and actively receiving support to secure employment.
- **46 (74%)** of these service users were **aged between 25 and 49**.
- **42 service users (68%) were male** and **20 were female (32%)**.

Employment Outcomes

The obvious programme focus is on securing employment outcomes for service users engaged in accessing its support. The following table outlines the range of employers types where service users have achieved employment outcomes, as a direct result of their engagement in the IPS programme:

Employer Type	Number of Outcomes
Professional	16
Retail	12
Catering / Hospitality	6
Technical	4
Security	3
Education	2
Care	1
TOTAL	44

- In total, there were **44 employment outcomes** for service users entering and receiving support through the IPS programme – this equates to 71% of service users securing employment.
- The **range and scale of employment outcomes** is testament to the **effectiveness of the IPS programme**.

Case Study – Service User:

The circumstances prior to joining Individual Placement and Support, meant that I was highly sensitive to my own problems and had little outlet for social interaction and no sense of professional achievement, that I once had. The lead up to my own hospital admission and the effects of my illness meant my motivation and concentration levels for external tasks was poor and most importantly for me at the time, my independence was lost.

I had heard of this new scheme called IPS when I was engaged in Action Mental Health, and the Mental Health Recovery team. At first I thought it may not be for me, but having had a short talk with the Employment Specialist, the idea of working again, with support, sounded very appealing. As we talked about my own voluntary work, and the opportunities opening up through the programme, I began to think about part-time work as a potential outcome for myself again! Permitted work now became a real-goal to aim for.

Real and tangible outcomes for me have been gaining valuable interview experience, development of my CV and employment success. I was initially successful gaining part-time temporary employment, in one of my dream positions in the role of a teacher (situated in an after schools club); and most pertinent for me, my current permanent part-time job, in a printing company.

During a gap in IPS engagement for me, I began voluntary work again, on a part-time basis at a printer's firm where I am now employed. It was during this voluntary placement that I re-started my involvement with IPS. This was following discussions with my OT, about exploring opportunities to work towards my goal of regaining paid work. The employment specialist negotiated a paid work opportunity with my employer. It has been very beneficial to have support when required to approach my current employer, when any issues arise I feel, which I need support, while in work and relating to work. Also, the support I have gained with regards to my own benefit entitlements has been highly valuable.

My life has changed now, since becoming involved in IPS and attaining a number of goals for myself. I was always afraid that with the gaps in my work experience and therefore, employment practice would mean that getting a job would be that bit harder for me, but with the involvement of the OT and employment specialist I was supported to obtain and sustain paid work. I feel immensely proud and even better off than I was for some time. Due to my illness (and the prognosis for my illness) it is no exaggeration for me to say, *with self-insight* that I am healthier for looking for, and attaining the right support at the right time in my life, with regards to looking for and now gaining employment

Qualitative Findings

To complement and provide depth to the quantitative findings outlined in the previous section, this section presents the qualitative findings emerging from this evaluation exercise. Again this reflects an analysis of indicator aligned information gathered through a range of sources including direct interaction with service users engaged in the programme as well as an online survey. Again the findings are supplemented with a number of case studies presented throughout the section.

There are a number of evidence sources to inform these qualitative findings including:

EVIDENCE AREA	DESCRIPTION
Service User Engagement	Findings emerging from focus group engagement with programme service users across a number of indicators.
Online Survey	A survey designed to determine impacts across a number of key indicators and issued to all service users engaged in the programme between 1 st April 2015 and 31 st March 2017.
IPS Employment Specialists	Detailed consultation with each of the two current Employment Specialists operating across the Early Intervention Team, North and South / West Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) allowing an insight into their direct engagement with service users, programme delivery and areas for development.
Occupational Therapists	Detailed consultation with various Occupational Therapists involved directly in the IPS programme.
BHSCT Multi-Disciplinary Teams	Consultation with the MDT teams across North and South / West Belfast where the Employment Specialists are embedded within the clinical teams allowing regular input from a range of professions and viewpoints including Occupational Therapists who are 'Vocational Champions' for IPS.
IPS Programme Steering Group	Consultation with AMH staff, Mental Health Service User Consultant, OT staff, Day Care staff and the OT Manager for Mental Health.

EVIDENCE AREA	DESCRIPTION
BHSCT Management Personnel	Direct interviews with a range of BHSCT staff who have a detailed understanding of the programme and BHSCT's commitment to ensure the IPS programme is embedded within mental health services as one of its vocational options.

Each of these consultation sources is outlined in turn in the following section.

Case Study – Service User:

I started working with the Employment Specialist on job searches in October / November 2014 after I had been out of the workplace for five years. I had some issues with confidence, and especially with how to explain to potential employers regarding the gap in my CV.

My Employment Specialist took a keen interest in helping me to improve my CV and in completing job applications. They talked through with me various opportunities as they arose, and commiserated with me when my job applications were unsuccessful. They also encouraged me to think beyond the obvious, for example, to apply for part-time jobs as well as full-time. It was one of the part-time jobs adverts which I got interviewed for and was offered. If it hadn't been for my Employment Specialist, I would not have considered part-time work, but now, two years on, my CV is up to date and I've had a great experience along the way. Even though my job has come to an end, I am in a much better position to apply for jobs at this stage, and I am back using the Employment Specialist's services once more - but this time from a much stronger position.

On a personal note, I have always found the Employment Specialist to be patient and even-tempered, and always positive to work with, even when the going gets tough. They give excellent advice after listening carefully to my needs and preferences for employment. They are always good-humoured and have the ability to keep me motivated, even when the outlook isn't great. I believe the success I've had in my job searches to date has been largely down to the Employment Specialist's attitude and drive. In short, the Employment Specialist is brilliant at their job and I feel very lucky to have benefited from this expertise.

Service Users Evidence

A focus group was arranged to allow a sample of service users to engage directly with the external evaluator. In total 17 service users engaged in this focus group representing a sample size of 27%. These 17 focus group attendees were made up from service users engaged across each of the Employment Specialists with a representative gender split. The focus group discussions centred around the personal impacts of the IPS programme:

CONSULTATION AREA	CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
<p>Most positive aspects of the IPS programme as a programme beneficiary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence, improved interview skills and feeling less isolated (isolated pre-employment). • Improved social skills, strength to cope with different situations that wouldn't have been there previously and a sense of hope for the future. • Starting to feel comfortable about myself and my ability to interact in different situations even with my mental health condition. • The security of having access to ongoing support whilst in employment or if you have left employment due to your mental health issue / illness. • I wouldn't be working without the IPS programme support. • The most important thing for me was the encouragement provided by the programme, which goes beyond practical support, which focuses on enhancing skills and building confidence. • One to one support from the team has been brilliant – great motivation from the Employment Specialists has been great. • After applying for more than five years before joining the programme and being unsuccessful, the team has been totally focused on securing me employment and for once I have been successful. • The advice and guidance regarding type and range of employment is very extensive and tailored to my needs. • The health service is understandably limited in terms of employment support, but I had given up all hope, but working with the IPS has made me feel that there was hope and I could achieve something. • The support is 'human to human', non-judgemental and looks beyond the mental health issue with a clear focus on recovery. • The programme support allowed me to focus on one particular type of employment and made it relevant to other jobs and skills. • This has helped my recovery in general and deal with problems that my mental health condition has highlighted. • The Employment Specialists have a very specific ability to extract information and make it relevant to the type of employment you are applying for. • After accessing the programme it taught me to not give up and persevere to make myself happy for me and who I am....strength and becoming stronger to do what you want to do. • Access to specific employment advice and guidance particularly around benefits and DLA allowance. • The self confidence increase has allowed me become more comfortable in social situations and I now find it less difficult to relate to people. • I hadn't worked in 15 years before the programme, but I now have self-belief and feel more confident to speak to people and get other outlooks on life. • The interest shown by the Employment Specialist grows your sense of worth. • People you meet for the first time ask, 'What do you do?'. The programme has allowed me to have an answer for this question and enter into a conversation with people that I couldn't before. Employment defines you and other people define as being or not being in employment. • A feeling of being 'normal' – that isn't about being ill, but taking part in life and playing a more active role. • The Employment Specialists have tailored the employment search to meet the needs of my mental health issues. • Having access to other activities is very therapeutic and have allowed me to 'keep it together'. • Allowed me to have freedom from the isolation. • Challenges you nicely / knows you've got it but the programme.
<p>Possible Improvement to the IPS programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having access to more funding to continue the programme. • Access to others who don't have mental health problems (Asperger's and autism). • More marketing and communication of the programme to ensure more people understand its focus and know where they can access it.

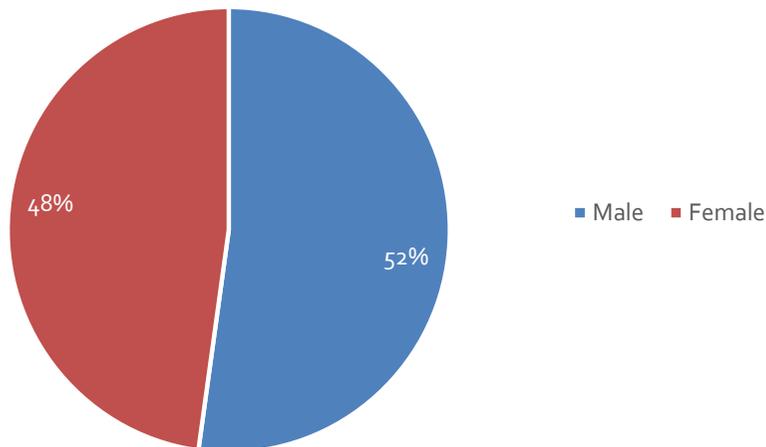
Online Service User Survey

A detailed survey was compiled which aimed to ascertain programme impacts across a number of key qualitative areas, in addition to a number of supplementary question areas. In total 30 surveys were completed which represented a response rate of 48% across all participants. The findings areas included:

- Gender split
- Age breakdown
- Self Confidence
- Improved job search skills
- Willingness to accept change
- Improved communication in interviews

Gender Split

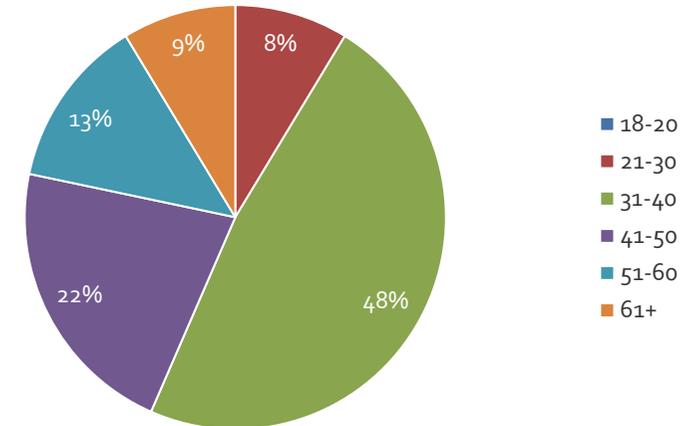
The chart below outlines the gender split of survey respondents:



There was a slight male majority of respondents who completed the online survey with 48% females and 52% males. Accounting for the quantitative findings this represented a greater sample of females than males as the overall programme engagement demographics showed there were more males who have participated in the programme during the evaluation period than females.

Age Breakdown

Respondents were asked to indicate their age across the following categories. The following graph outlines these responses:

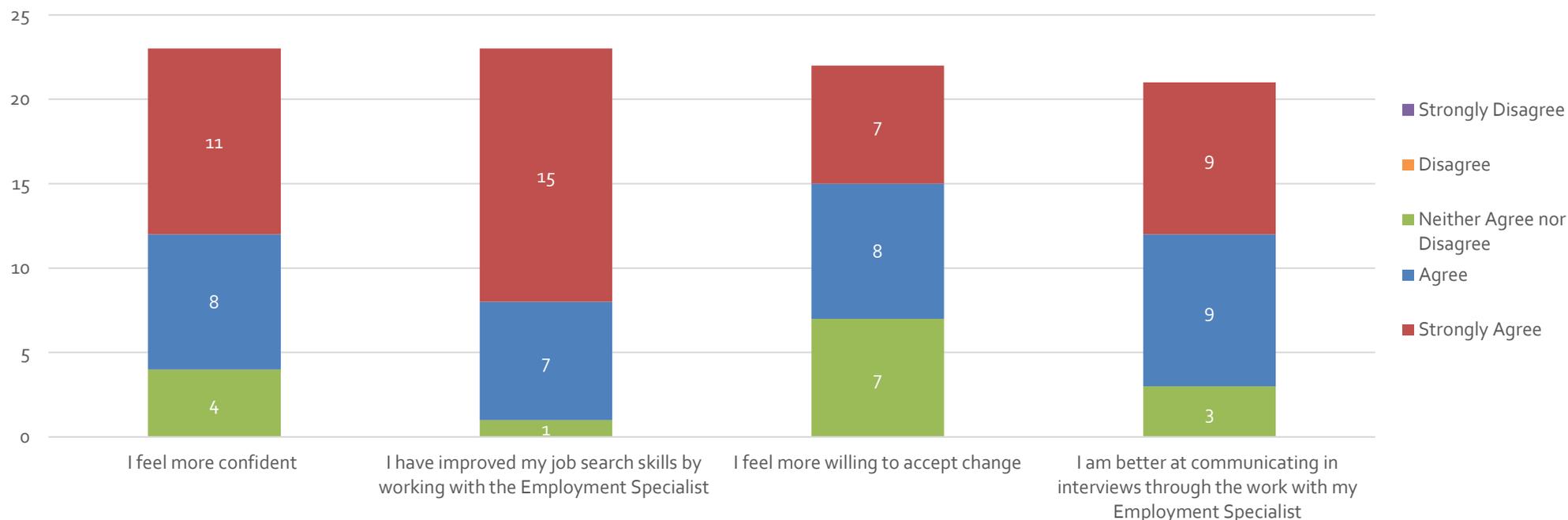


These age groups differed slightly from those used in the quantitative data analysis but the findings highlight the majority of respondents were aged between 31 and 40 (48%) and 41 to 50 (22%). This does correlate to the quantitative findings as the majority of service users engaged in the programme were aged between 25 and 49, with 9% of respondents were aged 61+. Overall, these findings are consistent with the age breakdown in the quantitative findings thus reflecting a representative sample of those engaged in the programme.



Service User Benefits as a Result of the Programme

Respondents were asked to rate their current level (i.e. strongly agree to strongly disagree) across four distinct indicators including increased self confidence, improved job search skills, willingness to accept change, and better communications in interviews. The table below outlines their responses:



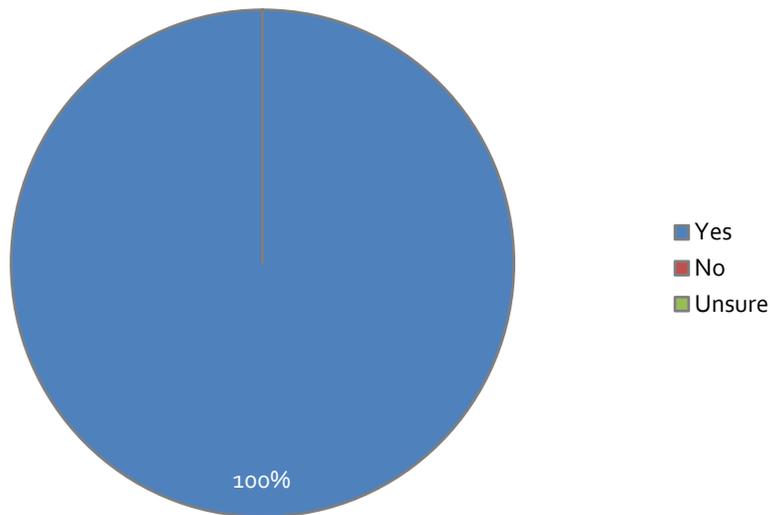
The findings outlined above indicate the following:

- No respondent indicated they disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the statements above therefore indicating no negative change as a result of their programme involvement.
- The majority of respondents felt their involvement had allowed them to experience positive change across all four indicators including:
 - **Increased confidence** – 19 of 23 respondents indicating either agreement (8) or strong agreement (11) their confidence had increased.
 - **Improved job search skills** – 22 of 23 respondents indicating either agreement (7) or strong agreement (15)
 - **Willingness to accept change** – 15 of 22 respondents indicating either agreement

- **(8) or strong agreement (7)** they were now more willing to accept change.
- **Better communication in interviews** – 18 of 21 respondents indicating either agreement (9) or strong agreement (9) they had better communication skills in interviews.
- The highest number of service users strongly agreeing across all indicators was against improved job search skills (15) which clearly demonstrates the employment focus of IPS support.
- The second highest strongly agree ratio was in the increased confidence indicator (11) which demonstrates the wider confidence based impacts that can be used in a variety of settings outside of the direct employment programme focus.

Motivation to Secure Employment

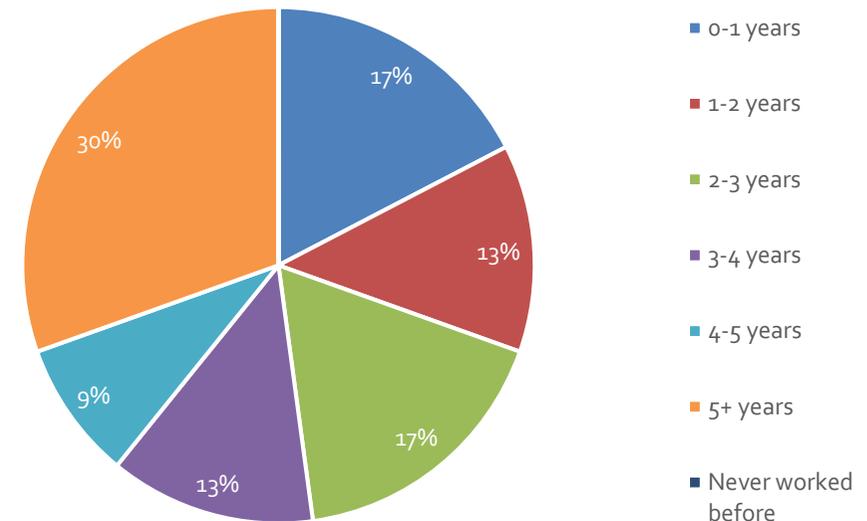
The chart below presents the number of respondents who indicated they had gained the ability to maintain their motivation to secure employment through the programme and their engagement with the IPS Employment Specialists directly.



Without exception all respondents indicated they had maintained their motivation to secure employment through their programme engagement and particularly their involvement with the IPS Employment Specialists. A key element of the IPS programme is the ongoing time unlimited support that the Employment Specialists have with service users post their initial employment outcome, which is and very much guided by the individual.

Duration out of Work Prior to Engagement in the IPS Programme

To provide a context to the issues people with severe and enduring mental health problems experience in terms of to being able or capable of working, respondents were asked how long they had been out of employment prior to engaging in the programme. The chart below outlines their responses in terms of number of years:



The chart leads to the following analysis:

- 30% of respondents had been out of work for 5 years or more – this is significant as it provides a context to the issues that people with severe and enduring mental health problems experience when seeking employment.
- Correspondingly, this is the same amount of service users who have been out of work for between 0-1 years (17%) and 1-2 years (13%).
- All respondents had some form of employment prior to engaging in the IPS programme, indicating there was some experience of the workplace and variety of benefits this can bring for people with severe or enduring mental health issues.

IPS Programme Approach

This evaluation aimed to examine the difference between the IPS programme and other similar employment focused programmes these service users may have had access to, or experience of. In essence, this was a new approach to previous employment programmes delivered by the programme partners. Respondents indicated the following:

- One-to-one nature of the engagement by the Employment Specialist.
- Having dedicated one-on-one help with the same person at each stage e.g. CV writing, interview skills etc. meant that I was able to feel comfortable. I felt much more at ease than with someone in a job centre who doesn't understand my difficulties.
- Personalised support that showed understanding of the limiting aspects of complex longstanding mental health problems, made worse by Autism.
- An Employment Specialist who was persistent in spite of many employer refusals and for me to do this personally would have impacted badly on own mental health.
- An Employment Specialist who could sell ability over limitations.
- I think this approach didn't stretch me enough but it catered for my mental illness needs more.
- The fact that the programme is tailored to suit my needs and not a one size fits all approach.
- The flexibility of the programme was perfect.
- The skill of the Employment Specialist and ability to be non-judgmental.
- The greater range of opportunities for service users accessing IPS support.
- I was with other employment programmes for 5 years but this has increased my self-confidence.

Case Study – Service User:

The chatting sessions with both OT and ES, were turning points to boost my confidence and improve my motivation on getting back to applying for jobs. The sessions helped me to enhance my knowledge in application processes, and interview facing techniques. In my opinion it is advantageous for you (IPS) spending some good chat sessions with the individual to get to know their situation, position and their feelings. Once you understand the person at the centre, helping the individual to get back to the right work is much easier.

Suggested Improvements to the IPS Programme

Based on their personal experience of the programme respondents were asked what improvements could be made to enhance the support provided and ultimately outcomes achieved by service users accessing the service. Respondents suggested the following:

- More targeted meetings on a regular basis. As much as I feel supported, I do feel I am very much on my own in my job search.
- If there is no current part-time work available in sector, what innovative scheme could be developed to keep a person engaged and "work ready".
- Looking at volunteer placements and courses that could improve my work prospects but to be honest there is little work for my demographic.
- I would make no improvements.
- Just extend it to the many others who could benefit across Northern Ireland.
- Available to more people.
- More awareness of autism and Asperger's syndrome.
- More funding.
- Educate employers about mental health conditions.

Case Study – Service User:

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the help and support the Employment Specialist has given me since I started the IPS programme. The Employment Specialist has been very supportive, helps me to be more confident performing at interviews and guides along the way while I'm employed.

The Employment Specialist has played such huge role in my life, where employment is concerned, always displaying a positive outlook and after every time I meet him I feel a lot more confident and positive regarding my employment circumstances.

The Employment Specialist is always at the end of the phone when needed and I can't sing his praises highly enough. This programme with the Employment Specialist's support has helped me immensely and I wouldn't be where I am today both in terms of employment situation and how I manage my mental health issue.

Additional Information

The survey culminated by offering respondents the opportunity to add any further information they felt would benefit the evaluation that hadn't already been discussed or outlined. Respondents indicated the following:

- The IPS programme helped me a lot.
- The close link to Psychiatry is very important - encouragement to seek work, try placements while in a safe connected therapeutic environment is key.
- This type of support is really valued.
- Thank you very much for the programme. It was a life-changer to greater encourage a sense of independence again!
- The programme has always been helpful even going back 6-7 years ago when various Employment Specialists have been very helpful in aiding me to gain employment in otherwise difficult circumstances.
- More funding for the programme and opportunities to participate.
- I am stressed, depressed and anxious. I have the label 'schizoid'. I claim employment and support allowance. I attend a health and wellbeing clinic, but even with these conditions I have still been able to secure employment, albeit I have withdrawn from the last position as I felt I could not continue in these circumstances. I do however wish to secure something that is more appropriate with the support of IPS.
- It is great to hear there are more employment specialists being employed.
- Please keep this programme going - all people need it!

Case Study – Carer:

My daughter suffers from severe anxiety and has Asperger's Syndrome. She is an intelligent person and has good qualifications but finds the whole process of going for interviews and applying for jobs extremely challenging. She is very fearful and lacking in confidence and reluctant to apply for jobs that she would be perfectly qualified to do.

She was introduced to the IPS Employment Specialist who has gradually helped her become more confident and encouraged her to apply for jobs she wouldn't otherwise apply for. The Employment Specialist has been assisting her with the whole process of filling in applications and going over interview techniques. She has been successful in getting some temporary work. My daughter has very individual needs and would have

sensory issues and difficulty with communication skills in a work environment. She is also very poor at communicating how she is feeling and she relies on the Employment Specialist to intervene if she is feeling stressed.

My daughter's mental health is very fragile, she would benefit greatly from regular employment. She has gradually become more confident and less fearful since being with the Employment Specialist. Because of her very individual needs she needs one to one support with someone she knows and trusts. The Employment Specialist has been invaluable in supporting her when she has been in work and also in helping her deal with the many setbacks that occur when looking for work. We as a family are very grateful for the service that the IPS programme provides.

Case Study – Occupational Therapist:

As an Occupational Therapist I work closely with the Employment Specialist. Employment was a goal that this Service User had set in Occupational Therapy and she had been delighted to get a number of temporary jobs. It transpired in one of these temporary positions that the employers had some concern with the Service User's work and it became apparent that the Service User was experiencing increased anxiety in her employment. It was agreed by myself the Employment Specialist, Employers, Service User and family that an Occupational Therapy work environmental assessment would be beneficial.

I was able to observe the Service User on one of her shifts and talk to her supervisors. From this assessment I was able to make some suggestions for some reasonable adjustments that the employer could put into place and practical suggestions that the Service User could try to assist in some areas of difficulty. This was then reviewed after a couple of weeks and was seen to have been successful and the Service User was able to remain in the job until the end of her contract.

IPS Employment Specialists

A detailed interview consultation was conducted with each of the Employment Specialists examining all aspects of the programme delivery from their viewpoint. The following text presents key findings emerging from these interviews.

CONSULTATION AREA	CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
General update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme is progressing very well and both the Trust and AMH appear very happy. The programme appears to be working for service users really well. We could benefit from a greater number of referrals, which isn't a particular issue with the MDT, but there are some who refer more than others. Sometimes the high turnover of staff from a BHSCT perspective has interrupted the consistency of referrals and approach but this is just the nature of BHSCT work.
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme as an Employment Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships that can be built with service users, mainly due to the one-to-one approach. The programme is changing people's lives – probably mostly a bit of a nudge in the right direction, which can have a massive difference. Being based in the MDT and hearing from the team and other key case workers, gives a real sense of coordination and team work. There are mutually beneficial skills and experience when in the programme team that complement those within AMH and particularly the MDT personnel.
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme for beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience tells us the programme changes how service users feel about themselves and as a result become different people. There is a lot of negative energy from their thoughts of themselves and their mental health issue. With the involvement of the Employment Specialists and the programme they start to find that they can achieve anything. Increased self confidence and self belief – they are not more employable, but have greater appreciation of what they can achieve. The confidence they achieve from knowing this is a competitive employment process. Many service users would be socially isolated as a result of their mental health issue, even getting them into a work environment on a part time basis allows them to integrate into a social environment that they would not have had the chance to previously. It is important as a lot of the best relationships are forged in work After securing employment service users have a focus to concentrate their mind on, providing structure and routine to their lives. They have access to different people to talk to about employment. The programme and the employment they secure allows them to talk about other things and not their illness or mental health issue. The programme expands their expectation of employment.
Possible Improvement to the IPS programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At times the compatibility of the two reporting systems can be burdensome (PARIS in the Trust and ESF), but it is appreciated this is due to funding arrangements. There have been some practical issues arranging the initial meeting between the service user, OT and the Employment Specialist, but this is due to everyone's availability and time constraints.
Unintended outcomes of the IPS programme delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strength and depth of the relationships built with service users – in many ways it's artificial but the programme allows you to get to know the service users so well.

Occupational Therapists

A detailed interview consultation was conducted with a range of Occupational Therapists operating across the IPS programme examining all aspects of the programme delivery from their viewpoint. The following text presents key findings emerging from this consultation.

CONSULTATION AREA	CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
General update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OT's act as 'Vocational Champions' possessing the applied knowledge and enthusiasm for vocational rehabilitation. OT's are very well established within the CMHT's and vocational rehabilitation is part of our core business. There are a number of key aspects of specific functions relating to our partnership work with IPS – supervision and caseload management with the Employment Specialist and representation on the programme steering group which is very useful for development and addressing issues on the ground.
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme as an Employment Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having the Employment Specialists based in the locality helps with access to service users and coordination of approach from BHSCT and AMH viewpoint. This also breaks down barriers for people accessing the service as there is less travel for service users to access the service. Practical advice regarding benefits – having that specific employment advice reduces worry for the service user, but also allows the MDT to access this support for other areas of their work. The programme operates a zero exclusion criteria – the service user only needs to show an interest in work to gain access to the IPS programme. Really good fit with our ethos as Occupational Therapists. The ability to have employment as an agenda item for service users is a rewarding additional aspect of service delivery / support. This programme operates a 'place and train' approach to employment which is a distinct difference from the traditional 'place and train' methods. The programme allows positive risk taking. Working with the Employment Specialist provides a set of skills that BHSCT staff can access outside of their area of expertise, directly related to recruitment and employment.
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme for beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing the service user with hope, breaking the cycle of hopelessness and having access to having a flexible approach to support those with enduring mental health issues. Service users benefit greatly from increased self-confidence and self-esteem. Integration into society and re-entering normality – feeling valued in society. The social aspect of securing employment is huge for service users securing it through the programme. This, in turn, allows networks, friendships and relationships to form leading to engagement with other social occasions that they can attend. Securing employment provides structure to service users lives and fills a void. This structure also allows a regulating of their daily activities and routine to their lives. The 'in work' support is also critical (from the Employment Specialist, the Occupational Therapists or both), stopping the service user falling apart at times, particularly for those who haven't disclosed their mental health issue to their employer. Securing employment allows the service user to change their roles in their lives, providing significant purpose to their lives and having a focus on normal. There is a singular focus on employment when service users meet Employment Specialists. This inspires hope and optimism (internalised stigma) and increases aspirations, expanding aims in life. This is extremely refreshing for the service user. The focus is on what can be achieved as opposed to what the service user is prevented from doing as a result of their mental health issue. The programme addresses individual service users' barriers to work, identifying their particular problems as a first step. Carers and families feel a great sense of pride and achievement seeing their family member securing employment, whilst also reducing stress with greater sense of normality.

Occupational Therapists

CONSULTATION AREA	CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
Possible Improvement to the IPS programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some issues with the compatibility of IT systems between the Trust and AMH – recording and reporting arrangements, as well as access to information for Occupational Therapists. • Develop a mechanism to facilitate service users with identified training / support needs through participation in New Horizons.
Unintended outcomes of the IPS programme delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'managed conversation' between the OT, Employment Specialist and the service user assisted them with clarification rework and they moved to education first.

BHSCT Management Representatives

A number of key management staff with a responsibility for mental health provision and therefore direct engagement with the programme were consulted as part of this exercise. The following table outlines their feedback regarding the programme.

CONSULTATION AREA	CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
General update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IPS programme represents a genuine recovery focused provision that is a moral compass in many ways and an example of how you do it and how you do it well. It provides the Trust strength in terms of the value base on the recovery journey. • The number of service users with severe and enduring mental health problems engaged in the programme have been fantastic. • Generally the programme is progressing very well – numbers tell a story and people vote with their feet. • Key strength for this programme is that it is a choice for service users – some pressure to gain outcomes, but this is a two way process that the service user is an active participant in. • IPS aligns so well with other aspects of Trust support to this service user group – peer support, exemplar employment programmes, goal setting and progression from the paternalistic / maternalist provision. This has helped 'tilt the norm' (from an employment viewpoint).
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme for the Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the Employment Specialists at the MDT meetings, as they are not health related, but focused on the employment aspect of the programme. • The Employment Specialist listens to the service user's work related goals, which is helped by the fact that they have a solely employment focus and not mental health / health related. • The Trust has changed culture as a direct result of the IPS programme which is totally focused on the employment support aspect to service users. • IPS programme is reassuring in many ways with provision of advice and guidance regarding employment law, benefits advice etc. • The Trust is now employing service users who have been through the programme. • Trust staff's knowledge and understanding of the programme and its ability to support people with severe and enduring mental health problems is growing. • AMH brings practical experience and openness to the programme and the Trust sees this as a genuine and worthwhile partnership allowing a bespoke and targeted approach to be taken to providing employment support to service users.
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme for beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users participating in the programme and securing an employment outcome gain greater self-confidence and self-esteem generally whilst increasing their social networks and now feel they can now involve themselves in a conversation regarding employment.
Possible Improvement to the IPS programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst acknowledging AMH has existing employer contacts that are fully maximised through IPS, it was felt the Employment Specialists could make further contacts with potential employers outside of those existing AMH / employers relationships.

BHSCT Multi-Disciplinary Team

The Employment Specialists are based in the MDT's across the North and South / West areas. It was therefore critical to consult with each of the teams in those areas and importantly gather evidence from the variety of personnel involved in these teams. The Employment Specialist in North Belfast was also linked into the BHSCT Early Intervention Team which expanded the scope and impact of the programme in this area.

CONSULTATION AREA	CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
General update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme has been progressing really well, after starting on a smaller scale in 2011 and now developed to having 3 full time Employment Specialists • It has strengthened to a stage where employment is placed as viable option for people in their recovery, particularly given the wider socio-economic issues of the area. • We have another option to support patients lives. This has allowed us to open up this as an option that service users feel they could benefit from. • It has been really beneficial for service users across a range of areas. • We tend not to wrap people up in cotton wool – this is another strand to this ethos. • We see ourselves as social champions providing real life impacts through the programme.
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme as the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Employment Specialists get to know the service user group being based in the MDT and actively contribute to the discussions and flow of information. • Just having access to the programme to assist the Trust positively impact service users employment needs is a significant benefit. • Work conducted by the Employment Specialist can actually act as evidence for service users' benefits re-assessment process (i.e. proof of seeking employment). • Having the Employment Specialist in the team maintains the profile and commitment to the programme – its upfront and central and allows the Employment Specialist to feel part of the team, as well as provide more timely and direct access to service users.
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme for beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users often experience a lot of as a result of their mental health problems and the Employment Specialist's role provides them a pathway back into a range of opportunities – getting control of their life, which is very much within the recovery ethos of the Trust. • There are some examples of service users who have not had employment for 18 years. Through the programme support the service user was able to access employment successfully. • Integration into society and re-entering normality – feeling valued in society. • Sense of having a role and function / be normal as anyone else – decreasing the stigma. • A lot of these people would not have a job without the support and have the confidence to secure employment.
Possible Improvement to the IPS programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of the programme generally, but particularly within BHSCT. • Sometimes there has been a delay in getting people on the programme as the first assessment has been an issue. • Links with employers – having their own links specific to the programme. • Introducing Employment Specialist into the group setting. • The visibility of the programme has dipped slightly recently and could benefit from an increase in profile and marketing across various channels.
Unintended outcomes of the IPS programme delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability of Trust staff accessing the employment specific skills and experience of the Employment Specialists for other aspects of service user focused work – service user may not be ready to seek employment but may benefit from advice and support.

IPS Steering Group

As the first point of contact the IPS Steering Group was integral to the consultation process to both inform the evaluation exercise but also shape and guide the method through which this evaluation would be conducted. The following table outlines feedback from the IPS Steering Group:

CONSULTATION AREA	CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
General update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IPS programme is the only programme of its kind in Northern Ireland. The Employment Specialists have been recruited with a dedicated employment and employability background / skills set rather than a health or medical background therefore allowing a purely employment focus.
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme as a Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme delivers a 'place and train' approach to securing employment outcomes for service users. This is a distinct step away from the traditional 'train and place' methods used similar employment focused projects. This appears to have worked very well for service users accessing the support and has showed in the numbers securing employment as an outcome. The Employment Specialists are based within the Multi-Disciplinary Teams in a Trust setting allowing them access to and an active role in provision of a bespoke service to service users wishing to secure employment outcomes.
Most positive aspects of the IPS programme for beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ongoing support provided by the Employment Specialists does not cease when the service user secures an employment outcome which provided service users with dedicated and tailored support to sustain and maintain their employment, particularly given their enduring mental health issue. Many service users do not disclose to their employer that they have a mental health issue, for a range of reasons but mainly as the programme secures employment outcomes through competitive recruitment processes and the service user typically feels any disclosure may impact their changes of securing employment or jeopardise their treatment whilst in employment.

Case Study – Employer:

This employee applied for a laboratory technician post in December 2015 and was successful at interview and subsequently appointed in post in January 2016. The supported employment scheme worked wonders for this employee in that he has achieved his goal of attaining a full time post. The employee passed an extended probationary period and now has a contract until July 2018. Thereafter I am recommending a new full time contract. Rewarding the employee's achievements during his employment thus far. The employee has, after a slow start and with some accommodations, become a valuable asset to the organisation and is liked and respected by both staff and students. He continues to develop as a person and in a professional capacity and is constantly striving to improve his skill set. Without the support of the IPS programme I doubt that any of this would have been possible for the employee who was initially reluctant to open up about his mental health problems in case he was stigmatised. We have always encouraged him to be open and transparent about this and he cautiously has listened to his Employment Specialist in the first instance and me as his line manager and now he appears to be much more forthcoming in explaining to his colleagues if he is having issues surrounding juggling different duties or with meeting deadlines for work etc. I can only comment that based on my experiences of the IPS programme all objectives have been met and will be exceeded most likely in the future for this employee. I hope the IPS programme continues and goes from strength to strength to provide realistic employment opportunities for those with mental health conditions.

Summary and Conclusions

The IPS programme has been developed to provide dedicated and tailored support to people with severe and enduring mental health problems to secure employment outcomes. Between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2017 62 service users participated in the programme and actively received support to secure employment. The vast majority of these service users were aged between 25 and 49 (74%), with 68% males and 32% females.

The employment outcomes have ranged in scope from a sales assistant in local retail to associate analyst in a global consultancy practice. In total, 44 employment outcomes have been secured for service users through the IPS programme.

Whilst employment is the programme's primary focus and the figures above outline this achievement very successfully, the life changing impacts service users have accrued as a result of this support and securing employment have been well evidenced throughout this evaluation process.

Service users benefits have included, increased self-confidence, improved self-esteem, increased determination and motivation, decreased isolation and enhanced skills, understanding and knowledge of employability techniques. This has culminated in many wider improvements in service users lives including, increased social confidence and networks, improved family relationships, enhanced coping strategies to deal with mental health issues, increased ability to relate to people and communicate more comfortably.

The IPS programme has adopted a wholly flexible, service user centred approach to its delivery through its Employment Specialists. A key element to this approach is the placement of Employment Specialists in the BHSCT Mental Health Teams in north, south and west Belfast, as well as the Trustwide Early Intervention Team and working closely with the Occupational Therapist in these teams to ensure a tailored approach. A new Employment Specialist has been placed in the East Belfast Mental Health Team from February 2017.

BHSCT as the commissioning body and AMH as the lead delivery partner have received exceptional benefits from the programme delivery also. BHSCT has used the IPS programme as an exemplar of how to deliver a service to service users experiencing mental health problems that not only enhances their employment status, but also allows them to address issues in their lives that have been negatively impacted by their mental health conditions (i.e.

Summary and Conclusions

social interaction, isolation, self-confidence, self-esteem etc.). This programme has been at the forefront of supporting transformational change within the organisation as part of it's whole focus.

Action Mental Health has also used the programme to re-affirm its change from traditional 'train and place' methods of engaging those with mental health problems in an employment setting, to 'place and train' which is distinct and extremely impactful.

Overall, the ability to secure employment outcomes through the IPS programme has allowed service users with severe and enduring mental health problems to enhance their recovery journey. This has been successfully undertaken through the IPS programme, delivered in partnership between two key drivers in the BHSCT and Action Mental Health. This evaluation has clearly demonstrated the wide ranging and varied impacts for all partners, but none more so than service users experiencing severe and enduring mental health problems.



Introduction

This evaluation process has generated a range of findings that have in turn been used to inform the development of practical and logical recommendations. Outlined in the following table these recommendations aim to maximise the benefits accrued by people with severe and enduring mental health problems involved in the programme and the programmes' key stakeholders. This information should be considered within the context of a previous evaluation conducted in February 2013 which also presented a number of recommendations aimed at improving and enhancing future programme provision.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE
To continue to deliver a comprehensive and long term support programme for this target group.	The IPS programme has very clearly demonstrated its impact across a range of indicators for those with severe and enduring mental health problems. The programme's strength is built on the ability to provide a professional employability focused programme, which is both targeted to an individual's circumstances and dovetails with treatment / clinical intervention. Importantly, this support should continue to be provided on an ongoing and long term basis that does not cease when programme participants secure an employment outcome.
To enhance and increase the marketing and communication of the programme to all stakeholders (service users, staff members, referral agents etc.).	Evidence suggests, whilst the Employment Specialists are based in the heart of the Multi-Disciplinary Teams with a direct line of communication and engagement, the profile of the programme could be increased and improved to allow more people with enduring and severe mental health problems to have an awareness of the opportunities it provides. Feedback indicated more people could avail of the excellent opportunities the programme provides if there was greater profile and awareness raising of its existence and delivery generally. There is also some evidence of the marketing and communications reducing slightly in recent times. This service should continue to be placed at the core of service delivery for those with severe and enduring mental health problems.
Continue to utilise the strong partnership between AMH and BHSCT.	Programme success has been built on the strong and robust partnership developed between Action Mental Health and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. Evidence suggests this has worked extremely well and effectively allowing significant life changing impacts for at those suffering severe and enduring mental health issues. This relationship is particularly effective given the Employment Specialist placement and direct interaction with a number of key Trust personnel / structures (i.e. Occupational Therapists (as vocational champions), the Multi-Disciplinary Teams and the Early Intervention team) and within AMH, a dedicated mental health charity. This direct linkage and interaction has allow strong collaboration and coordinated provision benefitting service users across these areas.
BHSCT should continue to explore and develop opportunities for Mental Health service users within its own workforce.	Through IPS and other employment initiatives BHSCT has a number of initial places specifically for mental health users (i.e. Peer Support Workers and the Exemplar Employment Scheme), but these would benefit from further development.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE
Implementation of more practical arrangements for periods when Employment Specialists are unavailable.	Consultation has indicated arrangements to support BHSCT staff during periods when Employment Specialists are unavailable have, at times, slowed or delayed the service provision to service users. Against a backdrop of AMH being contracted by BHSCT to provide a 48 week service throughout the year, it is suggested that greater formal planning is undertaken in advance of these unavailable periods, thus minimising any potential negative impacts for service users. This may include for example, formal contingency planning between the Occupational Therapists and Employment Specialists.
Increase or extend the current employer network	It is acknowledged there are varied and resourceful links with employers that can be accessed by the IPS programme and the Employment Specialists. Whilst this has been extremely worthwhile and impactful it would be beneficial to increase the number and range of employer links to the programme in the future.
Develop a two tiered programme provision that accommodates existing service users who have secured employment and a second for those attempting to secure employment outcome.	A major strength of the programme is the ability of Employment Specialists to continue to provide support to service users who have secured an employment outcome. This has provided substantial comfort and assistance to service users whilst in employment and allowed them to sustain and maintain that employment whilst managing their mental health problems. At times, support requirements are unpredictable and negatively impact or limit the Employment Specialist's work to engage new service users in the programme. This is further bound by the guideline that Employment Specialists work with approximately 20 active service users at any one time. Therefore, it is suggested an approach is examined that allows greater focus on both aspects of the programme delivery that does not allow either to negatively the effective provision of the other.
Increase the number of service users using IPS.	Whilst it is acknowledged the number of participants have been constant and regular from BHSCT staff there is evidence to suggest the number of referrals could be increased. Employment Specialists, whilst working to the 20 active service users at any one time guideline are keen to maximise programme impacts for service users which would benefit from a greater number of service users self referring into the programme.
Explore the possibility of providing training and support for employers to accommodate people with severe and enduring mental health problems in an employment setting.	Consultation with service users and Employment Specialists indicates that almost all service users securing employment do not disclose their mental health issue to their new employer. This is based on an assumption that it could jeopardise the service users employment or their experience with their employer / as an employee. Evidence suggests that employers may benefit from access to, and participation in, training or awareness raising regarding accommodating employees with severe and enduring mental health problems in an employment setting. As well as most likely enhancing the employment experience by service users, this may also allow a greater number of service users disclosing their mental health issue to employers.



IPS Employment Specialists
AMH New Horizons
Level 2 Fisherwick Building
9 Upper Queen Street, Belfast BT1 6FB
T 028 9027 8283

www.amh.org.uk



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