

Example of joint working between mental health and substance use services.

Highlighting the role of community mental health teams in cases where there is a concern from the substance use team about an individual's mental health.

The purpose of this is to enable reflection within Community Mental Health Team on their role in supporting people with co-occurring mental health and substance use, and to learn from examples of good practice from elsewhere.

Joint working and collaboration coupled with flexibility, allows for quickly addressing any concerns. When there is a change in an individual's mental health, good relationships and communication are important to allow for:

- Identification of support needs and appropriate services, such as primary care or third sector, to enable earlier intervention.
- Reassurance around levels of risk within substance use services and knowing what support there is for an individual outwith the service.
- Additional support with regards to care coordination.

Substance use service contacted the community mental health team (CMHT) with concerns about an individual's mental health. Their alcohol consumption had reduced, and some symptoms of previous trauma had returned, with a deterioration of mood.



Joint discussion



There was a joint discussion on possible risk. Although no risk was identified through this discussion, CMHT agreed to complete routine assessment to provide advice and recommendations.

CMHT provided advice to the substance use worker and agreed to assess the person's mental health needs and take forward any actions required.



Mental health assessment

This was undertaken by a mental health nurse within the community mental health team who has a role in assessing and providing the relevant clinical recommendations e.g. Pharmacological or psychological interventions.

CMHT identified low level mental health needs and advised engagement with third sector bereavement counselling and GP to consider first line anti-depressant medication. Assessment recommendations were shared with the substance use service.

Ongoing communication is key.

It is important to understand each service's role at different stages of recovery. Ongoing communication between services is needed to understand what stage a person is at.

It is helpful for the person to know that services are speaking with each other, working together to support the person's outcomes.

The ability to check any concerns with a specialist service is beneficial in the long term.

“ CMHT involvement not required but sometimes you need to see the person to make that decision. Although this creates more pressure on the service, it is worth it to identify the person's needs – Mental Health Team Leader

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