

NHS Health Checks for Mental Health Service Users

Summary and Context

Having a mental health problem increases an individual's risk of developing physical ill-health including cardiovascular disease. People with a severe mental illness die, on average 16 -25 years earlier than those without. They are also less likely to benefit from mainstream screening and public health programmes.

The aim of this project was to ensure mental health service users have access and support to attend NHS Health Checks, reduce lifestyle risks identified and address health inequalities.

We worked with our NHS Mental Health Service provider to offer NHS Health checks to their service users and provide additional support, together with their care co-ordinator, to help them with lifestyle changes.

- The mental health provider identifies the patients who are eligible.
- Mental Health Care Co-ordinator sends service user a reminder the night before the health check appointment. Mental health Care Co-ordinator can attend with the service user if required
- The Community Wellbeing team deliver the NHS Health Check in the community mental health clinic
- Health Ambassadors (Health trainers) support the wellbeing team to engage clients in health improvement support services
- All results sent the GP practice and to the Mental Health Service Provider with patient's consent.

Outcomes

In Swindon, in comparison to the regular cohort of NHS Health Check clients those with mental health problems are significantly more like to be obese, inactive or moderately inactive and to be a smoker. Although not statistically significant this client group had higher Q risk scores and higher diabetes risk.

The benefits are to:

- Support service users to access mainstream services
- Recognise their physical health needs
- Address health inequalities experienced by those with mental health services
- Support and up-skill mental health service providers in local health improvement services.

Lessons learned and conclusion

- Mental health service users can need support to access health checks
- Mental health care co-ordinators are not aware of local health improvement services
- Mental Health providers and some primary care services are incentivised to deliver physical health checks to this client group.
- Offering the NHS Health Check programme to Mental Health Service user enable mental health services and public health lifestyles service to work together with the client group to improve the physical health of this cohort and address health inequalities.