



Improving Mental Health Services for
Vulnerable Adult Migrants:
A Commissioning Approach
Mind in Harrow – Josie Hinton

Commissioning Guidance



Commissioning mental health services for vulnerable adult migrants Guidance for commissioners

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Project Plan/Activities

Aim: Vulnerable migrants living in Harrow have access to mental health services that are responsive and culturally appropriate

Community focus

Somali (UK home to the largest Somali community; 7-8000 in Harrow)

Tamil (Harrow is home to the largest Sri Lankan community in the UK; 10,392 Sri Lankan born residents in Harrow)

Afghan (52,000 UK residents born in Afghanistan, 70% live in northwest London; one of the ten largest migrant groups in Harrow)

South Asian (subcontinent of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh; 21,538 in Harrow were born in India; Gujarati is Harrow's most widely spoken language after English)

Project Plan/Activities

- **Awareness raising workshops**

- Mind in Harrow's current work with 4 migrant communities

- **2 Capacity building workshops**

- 1st: commissioning process and role of key partners (CCG, public health, Health watch). Started to identify community mental health and wellbeing needs and gaps in service provision
- 2nd: Preparation for commissioning workshop; summary of recommendations for commissioners outlined in national policy and guidance

Project Plan/Activities

■ **Commissioners - half day workshop**

- Presentation from community representatives: migration experience, local demographics and personal testimonies illustrating areas of unmet need
- Presentation from Mind in Harrow: our engagement model and national guidance for effective engagement with BAMER communities (e.g. Bradley Commission briefing, 2013)

■ **Debriefing/feedback**

- 1 session with community representatives
 - What went well and areas for improvement
 - Involvement in future work
- Written feedback from commissioners
- Follow up work: formal response to draft commissioning intention 2015/2016, voluntary sector involvement in JSNA

Achievements/Outcomes

- **Engagement:** 12 community representatives (3 from each community) and 3 organisational representatives (1 from the Tamil, Somali and Afghan communities)

Outcome 1 (raising awareness of commissioners and service providers about needs and gaps in service delivery)

- Engaging commissioners: GP lead for mental health, lay member (diversity lead), commissioning manager and public health representative
- Attended Harrow CCG Equality and engagement sub-committee - used wider policy context (local and national) to state why this work is important (e.g. DOH Crisis concordat, Out of Hospital strategy, 'no health without mental health')

Achievements/Outcomes

- Effectively used individual stories to convey broader unmet need (feedback)
- Community and organisational representatives talked about local demographics, migration experience, health and well being status and service utilization
- Summarised key issues across migrant communities which informed local recommendations
- Examples: poor recognition of diversity within communities, poor interpreting services, poor joined up working across services (need for holistic service provision)

Achievements/Outcomes

Outcome 2 (mental health services are accessible and culturally responsive, monitoring uptake and outcomes)

- JSNA – poor evidence base: included in formal response to draft commissioning intentions 2015/2016; involved Health watch
- Managed to get an additional statement in draft commissioning intentions requiring service providers to make 'reasonable adjustments' for 'underserved groups'
- Formal response to draft commissioning intentions asked what commissioning/contracting changes will be introduced to ensure and monitor the above
- Information available about numbers of migrants accessing a service but limited data available regarding outcomes for specific groups

Achievements/Outcomes

Outcome 3 (enabling migrant service users – services, entitlements and role in influencing the design and delivery of services)

- Feedback from capacity building workshops

1st: 100% - learnt new information at this workshop specifically about the commissioning process and other organisations

83% - more able to engage with the local commissioning process and influence it

91% - planned to or were already involved with (1) with influencing or campaigning around mental health services

Achievements/Outcomes

2nd: 75% - felt more able to engage with the local commissioning process and influence it

Individuals wanted to know more about how the 'system' works

- Challenge providing 'a full understanding of the restraints of the commissioners and the framework within which they are operating'
- Engagement and capacity building takes time and requires investment – this is true for both organisational and community representatives

Achievements/Outcomes

Outcome 4 (increasing cooperation between commissioners, voluntary sector, statutory sector and the local community)

- Unique model: first time for this kind of round table discussion
- Recommendation: local multi-agency migrant health forum bringing together the local community, culturally specific agencies and commissioners. This would inform strategic planning and build trust) (Women's Health and Equality Consortium, p31)
- Response to draft commissioning intentions 2015/2016: culturally specific engagement activities to be detailed in the CCGs Public Equality Duty Action Plan 2015/2016

Learnings/Challenges

- Engagement and capacity building takes time and requires investment – this is true for both organisational and community representatives – LONG TERM INVESTMENT
- Culturally specific organisations are struggling with day-day survival – lacking capacity to engage in bigger picture. Difficult to get consistent engagement
- Need time to create a common language and approach that commissioners and the local community understand and can work with
- Structural challenges: CCGs are relatively new structures, huge cuts (competing priorities), coordination between CCG and public health
- Integrating the local and the national
- Transparency regarding decision making/priorities