

Guideline Eight

Ensuring that basic needs of everyday living - housing, money, practical support are met.

Background

People with a first episode or a psychosis often access care after a long period or active psychotic symptoms which can lead to impoverished personal circumstances. Unstable living and financial circumstances are known vulnerability factors for relapse.

Requirements

1. To make available appropriate accommodation or the client's choice in the short to medium term.
2. To assess the individual's eligibility for benefits, grants etc.
3. To get specialised help when needed: legal aid, social work, CAB etc.
4. Assessments and action plans are likely to need review more frequently than statutory requirements. We would suggest assessment at six weekly intervals initially.

Getting it right....

Donald had deteriorated in his high rise flat due to his psychosis. He had been burgled several times and had no heating or light. His keyworker arranged a move to a housing association supported scheme and the occupational therapist helped him with cooking and budgeting.

Where things can go wrong....

Brian was admitted to the ward for a brief stay after he complained of low mood and difficulty coping. He was discharged after a few months

without follow up. Six months later he was admitted after concerns were expressed about his safety. He had smashed up his flat, had few possessions and appeared to have given money away to youths who lived nearby. He was also expressing psychotic thoughts. A full assessment initially may have highlighted his needs more easily.

Ask Yourself.....

For the last four young people with psychosis you have seen professionally:

- Can you name the social worker?
- Have they had social work contact, other than that associated with the Mental Health Act?
- Have the family had a social needs assessment?

National Service Framework Links: Standard 4 requires a written comprehensive assessment of personal and mental health needs.