

Inputs

Investment

- › existing clinical service
- › £100 per place for on line support network

Service cost

Cost of service as usual; £600.81

Cost of service inc on line support network; £704.17 (14% higher)

Resources

- › Staff time
- › Training in on line support network
- › IT, internet access and time for patients

The Service

Journey through Service

On referral to the service, each patient is assessed to check that the service is the right one for them.

There is then a wait to begin an intervention with a therapist.

All patients were offered access to an on line peer support network during this waiting period.

The network enables patients to interact with others with similar problems through accessing a website, where topics for discussion are presented, or people can create their own topic.

They could use the network as much as they wanted over a 6 month period.

- › 1073 patients were offered the network
- › 316 people activated network use
- › 72 people used it for more than 1 hour

Summary of Benefits

Service usage and clinical outcomes

No significant differences were found between those who used the network for more than 1 hour and those who had the service as usual on;

- Number of clinical sessions
- Duration of clinical sessions
- Clinical outcomes

- Potential reduction in use of GP services

Next Steps

Prospective research is needed to establish any impact on wider service use e.g. generic primary care services, on sickness absence, and the views of those who did and did not use the network.