NIHR | Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Teams

RECOMMENDATIONS

These are the eight recommendations for drug and alcohol services based on the findings from the NIHR PHIRST funded evaluation research. Each recommendation is picked up on subsequent pages and the main findings that led the research team to make that recommendation are highlighted. If you want to know more about the methods used these are outlined at the end of the document.

Recommendation 1
A mixed or hybrid offer of both in-person and remote services should be available for both 1-2-1 and group support going forwards – who gets what needs to be flexible to service user circumstance, preference, and need. Supporting people at home or where they are is also needed for those who are most vulnerable.

Recommendation 2
The lead service provider organisation should formally review the technology, training, infrastructure, and resources required to deliver its desired future remote/mixed support offer.

Recommendation 3
The lead service provider organisation should explore ways in which service users' digital access and inclusion can be supported and consider developing a formal digital inclusion strategy/plan.

Recommendation 4
Assessment of the suitability/feasibility of remote delivery should be integrated into various stages of the lead organisation's initial assessment of service users. Clear criteria to assist staff in assessing the suitability/feasibility of remote delivery should be provided.

Recommendation 5
Homeworking should be offered as an option for staff, where feasible, with policy and guidance to ensure equitability. Office-based working space should also be provided.

Recommendation 6
The lead service provider organisation should review its range of drug and alcohol services and provide clear guidance for staff regarding whether each type of support can routinely be delivered remotely.

Recommendation 7
Face-to-face meetings between support workers and service users should be encouraged early in service users' engagement with services, or where specific risks or vulnerabilities have been identified.

Recommendation 8
The lead organisation should ensure that its monitoring and outcome data collection systems routinely capture the 'mode' (in-person or remote) of service delivery, to enable the effective ongoing assessment of engagement with, and outcomes of, both in-person and remote service delivery.