

## **Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Initial Assessment Guidelines**

### **6.0 Guidelines**

#### **6.1 General**

6.1.1 The process of undertaking assessments provides an opportunity to build relationships with the service user.

6.1.2 Assessment relies heavily on engaging the active participation and co-operation of the service user.

6.1.3 All interventions should be appropriate to the individual's personal goals and level of motivation.

6.1.4 Workers should proactively work with service user ambivalence.

6.1.5 The service user should have only one case manager and one interagency care plan.

6.1.6 Service users should not be over-assessed. Prior to beginning an assessment staff should check whether a comprehensive assessment has previously been undertaken, if so a copy should be requested. Assessments should not be repeated unnecessarily, if a re-assessment is required this should refer back to the previous assessment so the service user does not have to repeat all answers.

6.1.7 Workers should, as much as possible, aim to ask assessment questions in an open discussion format rather than directly from a checklist. The aim of all interventions is to build a trusting and personalised professional relationship rather than complete a mechanical task. Managed well, assessment and care planning can create opportunities for developing positive professional relationships.

6.1.8 Care planning should be done in conjunction with other agencies involved with the service user.

6.1.9 Assessment and care planning requires questions of a personal nature to be asked by the worker. In all cases the worker should ensure that an open and non-judgemental environment is created.

6.1.10 Service users should be informed why the information is being collected. If service users do not wish to answer particular questions or discuss certain aspects of their lives this must be respected.

6.1.11 Written comments made in assessment forms and care plans should be easily understood by all who may potentially read the documents, including service users to whom they refer. Wherever possible the services users own words should be recorded.

6.1.12 All service users will be offered support and follow-up in the case that any of the questions or issues raised throughout the assessment process has caused upset or concern.

#### **6.2 Initial assessment & matching the service user to the most appropriate service**

6.2.1 An initial assessment will be undertaken when a service user presents or is referred to a service looking for help with their substance use.

6.2.2 The aim of the initial assessment is to:

6.2.2.1 To determine the seriousness, urgency, nature and extent of the drug/ alcohol problem.

6.2.2.2 Identify any immediate risk factors.

6.2.2.3 Identify other presenting issues.

6.2.2.4 Determine the service user's motivation to engage with services.

6.2.2.5 Determine the most appropriate service to meet the service users needs. (The various options available should be explained to the service user.)

6.2.2.6 Determine whether a comprehensive assessment is required.

6.2.3 Following initial assessment the organisation/ service should know:

6.2.3.1 The seriousness / urgency of the drug / alcohol problem, and the service user's motivation to engage with services.

6.2.3.2 Whether the service user's most pressing needs can be met by the assessing service/organisation or whether onward referral is more appropriate to meet the service user's presenting needs.

6.2.3.3 The service user's goals in the short and long-term.

6.2.3.4 What other services are engaged with the service user.

6.2.3.5 Whether they have existing care plan.

6.2.3.6 Whether they have an existing case manager/ key worker.

6.2.4 Before commencing the initial assessment the staff member should ensure that the service user has an understanding of the assessment process and issues relating to confidentiality.

6.2.5 The initial assessment can be completed informally on initial contact with the service user if required. The key worker should then complete the necessary documentation.

6.2.6 The initial assessment will be recorded on the DLR Rehabilitation Pilot Initial Assessment form and should be entered in case notes as appropriate.

6.2.7 Following initial assessment if the assessing service can meet the service user's current needs and the service user is not linked in with other services nor requires linkages to other services the assessing service will to continue to work with the individual in line with their normal service provision.

6.2.8 If following initial assessment if it is established that the service user already has a care plan and case manager the person undertaking the initial assessment should seek consent from the service user to contact their case manager to contribute to the shared care plan if appropriate.

6.2.9 If the outcome of the assessment is that another service is best placed to meet the service user's needs; the assessing key worker should ensure they have sufficient information, service user consent to make an appropriate referral and service user consent to share the initial assessment with the new service. The referral should be made as expediently as possible. Initial assessments are valid for one month after which time the service user's circumstances may have changed and thus may need to have their assessment repeated.

6.2.10 If the outcome of the initial assessment is that the service user is linked to, or requires linkages to other services and does not have a shared care plan or case manager they should be informed about the DLR Rehabilitation Pilot. The processes involved in the pilot including inter-agency shared care planning and the sharing of information should be clearly explained. The benefits of case management and inter-agency shared care planning should be outlined. The service user should be asked if they wish to participate in the pilot. If the service user agrees to participate in the pilot their consent should be sought using the DLR Rehabilitation Pilot Service User Information Leaflet and Consent Form and a comprehensive assessment should be undertaken. If the service user does not wish to participate in the pilot then the assessing service will to continue to work with the individual in line with their normal service provision.