

Appendix 1a

Evidence of leading multi-agency working (article edited for reasons of confidentiality)

Multi-agency working in action

An innovative and successful project has been developed with the Unit School attached to the Adolescent Unit, the Hertfordshire Adolescent Outreach team and Education Support Team for Medical Absence (ESTMA) recently.

As part of the project, young people whose education has been significantly disrupted as a result of their mental health issues received integrated support from the three services, with the aim of enabling them to return successfully to attendance at their mainstream school.

The young people attended the Unit School, a small school providing education for young people who are resident in an NHS funded Adolescent Unit, where they received support from the school staff, the Outreach team and ESTMA tutors.

The pilot was coordinated by Tricia Waples who is the Leader of Access Participation and Inclusion at the Unit School and who worked closely with the Outreach team Manager and the Head of ESTMA.

The project re-enforced the benefits of joint-working to achieve positive outcomes, with some young people who would otherwise have only been receiving a maximum of five hours a week education through ESTMA, returning to mainstream school. For them, it really has made a difference.



Case study 1

Peter – age 14 years

Peter was referred to ESTMA in March 2007 because he had school refused. He had a long history of anxiety problems, manifesting itself in challenging behaviour and physical symptoms such as nausea and abdominal pain. CAHMS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) referred him to the Adolescent Outreach team and he received various therapies, but was still unwilling to engage.

Peter was taken on to the pilot scheme, with the aim of supporting him back to school by September 2008. Starting with one-to-one work, he gradually integrated into the pupil group at the School. In March 2008 Peter had visited his own school twice and joined in with the Unit School pupils for some subjects. By May he was joining a number of classes in his school and the rest of the time a fully integrated member of the group at the Unit School. By July Peter was able to take part in an end of term performance at the Unit School and had agreed to return to his own school, which he was very positive about. Since September he has attended all sessions at his mainstream school and appears relaxed and fully integrated into his peer group. He gained top Cs for the Science modules that he sat in the summer term.

Positive benefits:

- Case very stuck, CAHMS and ESTMA unsure how to proceed. Parents despondent.
- Small Unit School provided dedicated staff and time for Peter to build confidence and self-esteem in a school setting.
- Joint working with ESTMA staff and school and regular reviews were very valuable. Peter and parents felt safe and progress was steady.
- Mainstream school very supportive and keen to work with Peter, followed advice offered by project staff.
- Returned to mainstream school.

Case study 2

Susan – age 15 years

Susan was referred to CAHMS at the end of 2006. Her school had reported her to be dyslexic and she was struggling to attend school, eventually stopping completely. Her GP stated that she was clingy and dependent on her mum, she felt suffocated round other people and was very self-aware. Hertfordshire Adolescent Outreach team identified that she had anxiety/phobic responses to school attendance/social contact

In autumn 2007 Susan was referred to ESTMA. She was unable to leave the house and shut herself in her wardrobe when a visitor arrived at the house. The ESTMA teacher coaxed her to work at home. In spring 2008 Susan and one of her ESTMA teachers, with support from the Outreach team, moved onto the Unit School for one-to-one work. Gradually Susan began to integrate, first with one other pupil, then with a group. She started making visits to her mainstream school and by July, Susan was able to plan her return to mainstream school. Since the beginning of term she has attended at least four full days of mainstream school and has managed to read aloud in class.

Positive benefits:

- Before the Unit School involvement Susan, was stuck.
- Joint working has been key to her success.
- Expertise of Unit School staff challenged Susan to take risks.
- Once support moved to Unit School site Susan's progress became much quicker.
- Susan is a very able pupil and aware of the implications of not being in school.
- Returned to mainstream school.