

Substance Misuse Treatment Framework Information and Advisory Services

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Substance Misuse Treatment Framework: Information and Advisory Services

This module primarily focuses on the provision of information and advice services in the context of adult services. Mention is made in some places to children and young persons services in regard of adults seeking information and advice in respect of younger people. However, for greater detail on the appropriate services for these groups, reference should be made to the appropriate Children and Young Persons Framework.

1. Defining Information and Advisory Services

Information and Advisory services deal with the provision of assistance and guidance in relation to identifying relevant services that match individual need and facilitating initial access to these services. Objective information can be provided in the context of enlightening people about the assistance, treatment, prevention and intervention options that may be available to them, whilst advisory services are those which help people to make contact or to interact with treatment services. Information and advice services are not expected to deliver specialist treatment interventions but signpost individuals to those services that can do so.

2. Overview

2.1 The delivery of information and advice services to people with a substance misuse problem, their family and/or carers can play a highly significant role in aiding the resolution of both direct substance misuse issues but also the surrounding anxieties of life, such as financial or legal difficulties. Through supporting and signposting access to these ancillary services they can have a major impact in readying people to tackle the substance misuse problem itself. Information and advice services are often a key entry point to treatment services and, thus, are very important.

2.2 Within the All Wales Strategy (Tackling Substance Misuse in Wales: a partnership approach) there are a number of commitments. The provision of information and advice is seen as a key prevention mechanism which can also be delivered through education programmes. It is also seen as a key aspect of supporting families, promoting safer behaviour and as a key aspect of supporting effective interventions. Thus, there are a number of key tasks which relate to the delivery of information and advice in a whole range of settings and by differing approaches.

2.3 Amongst the issues that people need information and advice on are:

- facts and information regarding substance misuse and treatment options;
- guidance and assistance in accessing specialist substance misuse services;
- housing advice and services;
- financial advice including benefits advice;
- employment and training;

- access to relationship counselling and support;
- child care advice and services;
- sexual health;
- mental health;
- disability;
- legal advice;
- young peoples services;
- needle exchange and substitute prescribing.

2.4 Consequently, information and advice services are not restricted to those provided by specialist substance misuse services. There are a whole range of other services (specialists in their own fields) that will be useful for people to access. This also means that there is a wide range of service structures and delivery methodologies applied to delivering these services. A crucial aspect of the successful delivery of these services will be communication, cooperation and information sharing between all the agencies involved.

2.5 A further key aspect is that the delivery of information and advice to individuals is not only the domain of specialist information and advisory services. At all stages of treatment and across the entire Substance Misuse Treatment Framework (SMTF), services should either provide or enable access to relevant information and advice for their service clients across a wide range of issues. This reflects the need for an holistic approach to treatment which seeks to assist service clients in all relevant aspects of their life which may, if not dealt with, inhibit the success of a treatment intervention.

3. Context

3.1 Along with the community as a whole, there are a number of key groups to which information and advice should be available:

- people with a substance misuse problem;
- families/carers of young people who are involved in substance misuse;
- substance misuse workers;
- other workers who may need to deal with the substance misuse issues, eg:
 - teachers;
 - social workers;
 - criminal justice workers;
 - health workers (physical and mental);
 - young people's workers;
- community action groups.

3.2 However, the ability of information and advice services to support people with a substance misuse problem is partly dictated by the availability of other specialist and non-specialist services.

4. Background Information

This section firstly considers the issue of service user need and the impact of such factors on the advisory service and then, secondly, it considers current examples of advisory service provision.

4.1 Information and Advice: Service Users and Service User Need

4.1.1 A number of advisory services currently exist that deal with both substance misuse and non-substance misuse issues. Most councils offer advisory services to facilitate the provision of information regarding services such as housing and financial benefits. Many substance misuse clients may at some point require access to these services. The mechanisms and methods of delivery utilised by these non-specialist can be incorporated and applied into the specialist substance misuse field. It is crucial, as outlined in the London Drug Line evaluation, that services are sufficiently promoted in order to raise client awareness.

4.1.2 Service users have wide and varied needs and this must be recognised when providing information and advisory services. Some service users will require more specialist advice and so information and advice services must ensure that these service users are referred onto appropriate services.

4.1.3 Staff of information and advice services need to ensure that service users are aware of what the service is able to offer:

- some will only offer advice,
- other may be able to offer intervention as well as advice
- some services may be able to act as facilitators to assist people in making contact with the relevant further services.
- some services may be able to offer all of the above.

4.1.4 This needs to be clear to the service user and made clear at the earliest opportunity when talking to a client.

4.1.5 In the Home Office report, *“Understanding problem drug use among young people accessing drug services: a multivariate approach using statistical modelling techniques”*, the issue of defining the limits of information and advisory services is discussed. When undertaking the research it was obvious that there was a need to be very clear about what the role of the staff was. Where confusion arose it was important that staff should:

“listen, be respectful, and make their position clear at the earliest opportunity. When parents continued to digress, the researchers explained that they were distinct from the drugs service staff again. It was also important to emphasis to parents how important their views were and to encourage them to repeat their concerns to the appropriate worker.”

Such an approach can be employed in the advisory services in clarifying the boundaries of what the service can and cannot do.

4.1.6 The National Treatment Agency (NTA) in England (**Models of Care for the treatment of drug misusers**) sets the boundaries for information and advice services as providing:

“... appropriate and professional advice and up-to-date information on all aspects of drug and alcohol misuse.”

4.1.7 This to include:

“information and advice around changing their lifestyles, minimising the complications associated with substance misuse, and accessing resources within the community.”

4.1.8 In some cases people will be unsure as to what services they require. In these instances advisory services need to be able to provide enough guidance and help for the person to make an accurate and educated decision. This will require the information and advice service to be able to assess what the individual's needs are and staff will need to be appropriately skilled.

4.1.9 What is clear is that information and advice services are a key first stage to the introduction of people to the necessary intervention services. They do not provide interventions themselves except in assisting individuals in gaining appropriate information and making appropriate contacts.

4.1.10 Information and advice services also need to be able to operate and deal with a number of group issues such as faith or language. One of the key areas of service user need that must be taken into account are issues such as language (In the 2001 census 21% of people said they could read Welsh, and 20% can write Welsh) or the needs of ethnic/faith communities. In the 2001 census the majority of those from a non-white ethnic background were located mainly in Cardiff, Newport and Swansea, the overall percentage of these in relation to the overall population was 2.12%, with White British/Irish recorded as being 97.88%. With regards to specific religious background the census details that 72% of population are Christian whilst less than 1% Muslim, with regard to other religious minorities there is little or no data readily available. (Statistics: NSO)

4.1.11 This emphasises the need for effective, integrated partnership working not only within the substance misuse sector but also with all types of community groups and organisations. This will include faith and cultural groups who will be well positioned to deliver information to many parts of the community. It is important to make full use of facilities, funding and contacts that these groups in the community may have in order to deliver information on substance misuse as widely and effectively as possible.

4.1.12 When looking at the provision of advisory services within Wales it is worth bearing in mind the rurality of certain parts of Wales, in particular on the basis of national statistics, Dyfed Powys and North Wales. An effective advisory service needs to overcome such issues ensuring that all clients and not just those from an urban setting are informed. The delivery of rural services creates particular problems in ensuring reasonable access to services. Thus the design of services may differ between urban and rural areas.

4.2 Information and Advisory Services: Existing Mechanisms

4.2.1 A wide variety of mechanisms are used by information and advisory services to provide information. These range from the use of leaflets/pamphlets to internet based services.

4.2.2 Products like the comprehensive DIP directories appear most useful as they present a wide enough range of services and information for clients to be able to make an informed decision on what next steps to take. The exact effectiveness of such pieces of work in terms of informing clients is yet to be effectively measured. Systems of benchmarking and appraisal are used and in place by some advisory services in England. In particular organisations and services like FRANK and the Samaritans have an active review process where the performance and effectiveness of the service is assessed. This will be an important aspect of the national helpline in Wales, DAN. The importance of such an appraisal and review is critical especially in pilot schemes and assessing areas of need. Another key area for regular review is ensuring that particular client needs are being met.

4.2.3 More recently there has been an increasing use of internet services to provide advice and information. For example, Samaritans, which is perhaps better known for its 24-hour helpline and office service, has developed an online system. Whilst the organisation primarily provides counselling it can provide service users with practical advice and information on other services that can help them out with a whole range of life difficulties. The confidentiality and ease of access no doubt help to make this a valuable service to many people.

4.2.4 Within the substance misuse field a number of advisory services have grown up to deal with the issue, such as FRANK, the online and telephone information and advice service in England, and in Wales, DAN (it is too early to evaluate the impact of DAN). The anti-drug FRANK campaign, launched in 2003 as part of a government initiative, makes full use of the internet. This is coupled with a public relations campaign involving televised adverts, local campaigns and a telephone service. Whilst FRANK has an active intervention role, it is also a key service in being able to provide easy access to current advice and signposting to other services. As they state in the annual review:

“At national level FRANK would build mass recognition and become a trusted source of drug information and advice.”

Within the first initial 12 months of the campaign commencement the website received 1.5 million visits and received over 30,000 emails. It appears to be a model which meets the needs of prospective clients. The Scottish Executive has established a website (**Know the Score**) which works alongside a free information line which provides access to information, advice and literature.

4.2.5 The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) service maintains alongside its offices an online service at www.adviceguide.co.uk, which can provide people with advice on legal, monetary and other issues. The CAB site offers advice sheets in a number of languages helping to overcome any potential language barriers. The website has a service that helps to locate the nearest CAB office and telephone advice is available from every CAB, which can be accessed through local directories. As part of their core generalist and holistic service, each CAB must provide high quality

signposting and referral services to clients as an integral part of the provision of information and advice services to the community.

As the Citizens Advice service' corporate website, www.citizensadvice.org.uk states:

“Meeting the information and advice needs of as many people as possible is a major aspiration for the Citizens Advice service. In 2005/06, Citizens Advice spent £1,695,000 on producing accurate information for bureaux to use to advise clients and for the public to access directly.”

The Citizens Advice Bureau also this year saw an 83% increase in those accessing its online service and won a national award for its online work.

4.2.6 The All Wales Schools Core Programme seeks to provide education, advice and information to young people and children between the ages of 5-16. The service offers a programme of education focussed on substance misuse. It is worth considering here the role of education as a form of preventative advisory service, in that it provides people with information before they become substance misusers. In the aspect that it seeks to provide young people with sufficient knowledge about substance misuse issues, the role of education services in delivering information and advice should not be disregarded.

4.2.7 As well as the use of information and advice in an educational or presentation format, information and advice should also be provided within the work place. Within the work place the role of the employer should be considered in terms of promoting advice and information services, often this could be done through a Health and Safety context. Employment services too can play a role in the provision of advice and information. Progress to Work provides a service that aims to help unemployed individuals with a history of problematic drug abuse back into employment. It provides support with regard to training, education and employment. It should be noted though that as with the All Wales Core Programme this is not exclusively an advisory service, rather it is firstly a service that seeks to resolve the issues, and the advisory element is a by-product of this. However, the service seeks a person centred approach and the service is delivered at the most convenient location for the service user to maximise take up. This is a key lesson in structuring information and advisory services.

4.2.8 These crossover services that provide information and advice as part of their role highlights the need for a clear definition of the role of information and advisory services in order to ensure an effective, focussed service provision which ensures that staff are not providing interventions in areas in which they are not qualified. Job Centre Plus offers not only a face to face service where clients can talk about what services are available or which people to contact. A computerised service is also available allowing service users to quickly call up information on employment issues and vacancies. The Citizens Advice Bureau has recently installed a similar system of electronic kiosks that have helped in cutting down waiting times and empowered service users as they can independently find the information they need.

4.2.9 NHS Direct is an online service which aims to provide patients with a wide variety of information on the NHS, illness and advice on coping. A number of useful features are available such as a self-help guide, a medical encyclopaedia and a search engine to locate the nearest G.P. One of the key benefits of this site is that it provides service users with enough information to make an informed decision about what they need without having to see a medical professional. In turn this frees up the medical professionals from having to see patients with minor cases or who may not need further treatment. NHS Direct is further backed up by a telephone service giving users an opportunity to talk to someone about issues. Such an integrated approach appears to be fairly common in the provision of national advisory services. This is a model that commissioners may wish to consider by utilising national helplines alongside local contact and access points.

4.2.10 Leaflets, pamphlets and posters tend to remain the most commonly used form of advisory service. Services ranging from the NHS, Prism and Cwysllt Ceredigion effectively use leaflets. The type of leaflet can range from catchall leaflets, which just describes the service, its aims and goals, to more specialist aspects of service or problems. As with the online and telephone approach there are a number of benefits and drawbacks to the approach. The chief problem being to ensure that people are receiving the leaflets particularly within a rural setting. Often leaflets are distributed from a central point eg G.P surgery or from the service's office. Another issue with leaflets is the need to keep them updated and relevant. This can be costly and these do not always reach the target audience.

4.3 Information and Advisory Services: Relevant Research

4.3.1 It is reported by the National Treatment Agency in England, that some categories of substance misusers, such as stimulant users, view access to information as a vital aspect of service delivery (**Farrell et al. 1998**). Research on Hepatitis C amongst drug users (*Hepatitis C - guidance for those working with drug users, Department of Health*) shows that most people:

“... want to make informed choices about their treatment and need access to up-to-date information in order to do this.”

This research also shows that effective information and advice can have a good impact on altering substance misuse behaviour. It also shows that it can support a decrease in the problems associated with safer injecting and safer sex. The importance of the advice being current and staff being appropriately trained in order to deliver an effective service is also shown in this and a number of other publications. Advice on alcohol issues has been shown to reduce consumption (**Wallace et al. 1988**).

4.3.2 A study by the Borders Drug and Alcohol Action Team (**Children Affected by Substance Misuse in the Family**) found that information and advice was the service most frequently delivered to both young people and adults.

4.3.3 A literature review by the Effective Interventions Unit (**Support for the Families of Drug Users: A review of the literature**) supports the need for people to have appropriate information and advice in accessing financial support as part of an overall approach. It also supports the role of information and advice in the prevention of substance misuse. This links back to the activities of the All Wales Core Project.

4.3.4 Whilst a key aspect of these services is to assist people in having a level of knowledge that increases their understanding and ability to deal with their issues, the Scottish Drug Misuse Database 2004/05, reported that the person's situation when seeking advice can have a profound effect on the ability of that information and advice to impact on enabling successful change. Thus it is not always about the service and its effectiveness but also about the individuals willingness to engage with change.

4.3.5 A study by the National Treatment Agency (**Marsden et al 2003**) showed that the provision of good information can have a significant impact on the behaviour of stimulant users. This was shown in some instances to be less effective than a more proactive intervention (motivational interviewing) in some cases but nonetheless worked well and was effective in reducing offending behaviour and improving health.

4.4 Information and Advisory Services: Summary

4.4.1 The primary ways of providing information and advisory services can be summarised as being:

- fixed office with staff and leaflets;
- fixed office as above with additional computerised information;
- distribution of leaflets, posters and contact details through as many appropriate outlets as possible (these should be as widely available through the everyday locations in the community as possible);
- internet service;
- telephone;
- travelling service;
- text to mobile;
- television/radio advice;
- education and presentations.

4.4.2 It appears unlikely that a service solely dedicated to the provision of information and advice would exist in the specialist substance misuse sector. These information and advice services will most usually be part of an overall substance misuse service delivery for both practical and economic reasons. Therefore, consideration will need to be given to the profile, standards and funding of these services rather than them being an incidental by product of the existence of intervention services.

5 Service Outcomes

5.1 The following are the expected outcomes for information and advice service delivery (whether by a specialist information and advice agency or another specialist substance misuse service):

- that the service is easily accessible to all potential service user's with particular respect to rural and urban issues;
- that access to and delivery of the service is done in such a way to reduce the risk of any stigmatisation occurring (this is important in helping individuals to overcome any reluctance in accessing services);
- that information and advice is presented in a very clear and accessible manner in the appropriate format and language;
- that service delivery and information is jargon free;
- that the information and advice given meets the needs of the service user;
- that the information and advice given enables people to access appropriate services to meet their holistic needs.

6 Methodology

Information and advice services can be delivered in a number of different ways as detailed above. The current known options from the background research are set out below with a summary of advantages and disadvantages to enable planners and commissioners to make their own judgement regarding appropriate service design for their circumstances.

Service Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
fixed office with staff and leaflets	Provision of staff on site can be useful in that service users can discuss the material available with a member of staff to ensure they are getting all the information they need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Area that the office can cover is confined to a geographical location ◇ Also some service users may have access issues in respect of travel, in particular those living in rural areas
fixed office as above but also computerised information	This enables people to follow a line of enquiry at their own pace and means it is, theoretically, easier to keep information updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Some people may not be computer proficient ◇ Again the issues of access could be a problem ◇ The technology can be expensive to install, set-up and maintain
leaflets available in many contact points	Much wider distribution than having leaflets in one specific place. Possible venues include health centres, A+E, custody suites, supermarkets, libraries, council and health offices, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Ensuring that the targeted client group are able to receive leaflets ◇ Need to ensure that information is accurate. This can be time and resource consuming ◇ There are the potential expenses in having to produce new up to date leaflets and ensuring distribution

Service Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
internet service	Offers neutral and confidential service that service users can freely access without having to give out personal information and in complete privacy Websites in general are cheap to maintain once set up, easier to update and maintain information therefore, greater relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Not everyone has access to the net, nor is everyone computer proficient ◇ Can be a problem with ensuring that the advice is valid and not only in support of one particular approach ◇ Ensuring the age appropriateness of material across the possible spectrum of service users
telephone	In relation to service users confidentiality offers a complete neutral and unbiased service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Need for staff who are able to deal with specialist needs. ◇ Issue of what time to run the service eg 24 hours or during peak times ◇ resolving the issue of call charges - should the number be freephone or not?
travelling service	Would offer a face to face contact point in which the issues can be discussed and appropriate services offered. This would be particularly appropriate for service users in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Cost of such a service, in terms of initial set up cost and then maintenance costs
texts to and from mobiles	Presents a relatively cost effective way of reaching and providing service users with information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Requires service users to submit information which some may not want to due to confidentiality eg telephone number
television/ radio advice	Much the same way as the internet, this presents a way to give service users advice on the topic, and also a follow-up number or website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Cost of such a campaign often limits it to the sphere of national government funded initiatives
combined service	This is the model seen in England and Scotland where a website runs alongside a helpline. This offers a number of different entry levels and a range of approaches that should suit all. It ensures an integrated, consistent and objective approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ There may be issues in linking the information to local resources and services. It is also difficult to provide information on the wraparound services though these can be signposted or dealt with on the helpline

Service Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
education and presentations	Such a model exists in the All Wales Core Schools Programme, and has potential for wider application. This method presents a way to provide service users with information on the dangers of substance misuse, and also as a way to deal with enquiries and to distribute advice and information on services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Issues of confidence and confidentiality, some users may not attend due to this. The presentational and educational talks would need to be promoted as a neutral event where the aim is to provide advice and information but not to criticise

7 Special Requirements

Local authorities and services are obligated under the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to make sure they do not discriminate and where possible that they actively promote equality. As part of the EIA an assessment of potential needs should be carried out. Some of the key groups as outlined in the EIA within an information and advice context can be seen as:

7.1 Young People: Young people are a particularly difficult specialist area as a number of issues crop up. There is firstly the issue of confidentiality, young people may not wish their parents to be involved or to know. Secondly a young person may feel embarrassed or afraid of the situation. The service needs to overcome this by providing an inviting and secure environment in which young people can get the information they need.

7.2 Minority and Faith Groups: There are a number of cultural aspects which should be taken into account when designing and delivering services. This is particularly an issue when dealing with language issues. Service users that have particular faiths will need to be dealt with as any other people, but services should avoid having any central religious bias in their approach. There will need to be sensitivity about any particular faith needs or restrictions. Language as well needs to be overcome with at least alternative language leaflets being available or interpreters on hand.

7.3 Rural Groups: There can be serious issues of how people can access the service. Service users in remote rural areas without their own transport or regular public transport would be unable to regularly go to service offices to collect the information they need. In addition rural communities can become isolated and advisory services need to reach out to these communities. Rural living can have its own set of stresses and these need to be dealt with (Buchan, 2002 and Boulanger *et al* 1999)

7.4 Physical Disability: As defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), a disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a long-term or substantial effect on a person's ability to carry out day to day tasks. There are some

8.5 million people in the UK who have some form of disability. Examples of physical disabilities include, eyesight, hearing, mobility and cognitive. All of these will require particular attention depending on the local incidence.

7.5 Visual Impairment: This includes people with vision problems ranging from impaired vision to no vision. This is particularly an issue when relying on web or leaflet based advice services. Leaflets and information would need to be available in Braille, large print and clearly laid out. In relation to web pages, those with no vision can use screen readers, whilst those with impaired or poor vision can utilise zoom or browser settings.

7.6 Hearing Impairment: As with eyesight this can range from impairment to complete deafness. This is particularly relevant when dealing with telephone communication or face-to-face consultation. With regard to face-to-face consultation sign language can help to overcome this barrier. Whilst in terms of phone lines text phones can be used so that service users can type messages and receive messages back in such a format.

7.7 Cognitive Disabilities: This can include disabilities such as learning disabilities and dyslexia. Learning disabilities can range from someone who has a low level mental impairment to more common factors such as poor literacy or difficulty in using computers. The use of graphics and easy to understand wording is one of the easiest and simplest ways to ensure that information is easy to access. In addition a simple and easy to follow layout for web pages will be of benefit to those with poor IT skills.

8 Service Specification

The table **opposite** (*originally said 'below' - this will need to be changed in Welsh*) sets out the essential components for each service style as already outlined. The service styles listed are based on the identified research as are the other factors such as the special requirements. It should be noted that this is a not a comprehensive list and planners and commissioners may wish to add other components.

Service Style	Essential Components			
	Location	Staff	Special Equipment	Literature
fixed office with staff and leaflets	Fixed to a geographic location such as city, town or village	<p>Person Specification: Staff that are able to deal with service user enquiries and any particular information needs that service users may have. Staff will need to have a good knowledge of available services as well as of substance misuse issues</p> <p>Qualification: Staff should be trained in all aspects of customer care. No particular qualification predicated though some NVQs available in customer care linked to service industries</p>	Relaxed, comfortable but smart environment in which to offer service. This should encourage those people who do not want to have contact with staff to come in and browse	Leaflets and information pamphlets on hand for service users to take away across both specialist substance misuse issues and services and other general life issues and services
fixed office as above but also computerised information	Fixed to a geographic location such as a town or village	Competent staff as above but also who can assist service users in using the computer points. May need additional training on IT issues	Computerised information system that is easy for service users to interact with and acquire the relevant information they need	Leaflets and information pamphlets on hand for service users to take away
leaflets available in many contact points	Should be distributed across geographical areas covered by the service	Staff needed to take leaflets to distribution points. Managers able to negotiate access to sites for leaflets. Access to a person with graphic design skills would be helpful	Either an external printing service is used or the service will need printing equipment	Leaflets containing accurate and up to date information. These need to be easily read by people from all educational backgrounds

Essential Components				
Service Style	Location	Staff	Special Equipment	Literature
internet service	Central hub at office and website with easily accessible design	At the very least one IT trained person to maintain and update the service	A computer that can serve as a central router. Any design should be tested for accessibility and information suitability on a regular basis. It will need to be regularly reviewed and updated	Some marketing of the service through leaflets or cards can be useful in ensuring awareness of the existence of the service
travelling service	This may either be a travelling vehicle fitted out to be able to deliver literature and face-to-face information and advice service or a mobile display that can be moved from location to location	The staffing requirements are very much as above with the addition that the individual will need the appropriate driving licence. Lone working may also be an issue here	An appropriate vehicle, display equipment and information resources. There may be opportunities to undertake this with other sectors information services. Privacy and a non-stigmatising approach are important (any signage would have to be carefully done)	Leaflets and directories containing accurate and up to date information. These need to be easily read by people from all educational backgrounds

Essential Components				
Service Style	Location	Staff	Special Equipment	Literature
telephone	A dedicated, freephone telephone line manned to agreed hours determined by demand and, realistically, by available funding. It must be clear that this is an information service and not a counselling service	Person Specification: Staff that are able to deal with service user enquiries and any particular information needs that service users may have. Staff will need to have a good knowledge of available services as well as of substance misuse issues Qualification: Staff should be trained in all aspects of customer care. No particular qualification predicated though some NVQs available in customer care linked to service industries	A dedicated phone line for service users with information and advice queries	Phone numbers should be made aware to service users either via leaflets or through websites, other services etc
texts to mobiles	This would normally be in response to a query although people may wish to sign up for a regular update service	The staffing requirements are very much as above together with a need to be up to date on texting mechanisms and language	Texting equipment possibly linked through a computer system rather than individual telephones	Text numbers should be made aware to clients either via leaflets or through websites, other services etc
education and presentations	Local venues such as town halls or schools, or within the service itself	Can vary and depends on presentation. Staff need to be trained in customer care and able to clearly present information	Presentation equipment and leaflets for distribution	Leaflets for distribution

9 Working with Non-Specialist Services

9.1 A key aspect of the provision of information and advice is to ensure the widest possible distribution of materials and information. This means that service planners, commissioners and providers need to work with non-specialist services to ensure that they are aware of the available services and have access to appropriate materials and information. Links will need to be made with Health Promotion Wales, existing schools programmes and criminal justice services to coordinate the provision and delivery of information resources.

9.2 There are other key areas where information should be available. These include:

- accident and emergency services;
- police and court buildings;
- educational establishments;
- libraries;
- local authority buildings;
- general practitioners/health centres;
- other health related services eg dentists.

This information should be available through a variety of media including:

- leaflets/pamphlets;
- posters;
- cd-rom.

9.3 It is imperative that links are made with the relevant organisations to co-ordinate arrangements for the delivery of information and advice that is reciprocal and enables substance misuse agencies to have access to information resources for non-specialist services. This may include the development of reciprocal arrangements for referral to services.

10 Accessibility

10.1 Information and advice services must have no restrictions regarding the types of people accessing them and have no restrictive criteria for access. These must be open access services suitable for all people and potential issues.

10.2 Where possible, services should be easy to access. This should include:

a. for services with a physical base:

- an easy to find location;
- the location to be accessible via public transport;
- easy access for people with a physical disability;
- a discrete appearance;
- a well maintained interior;
- the option for private consultation.

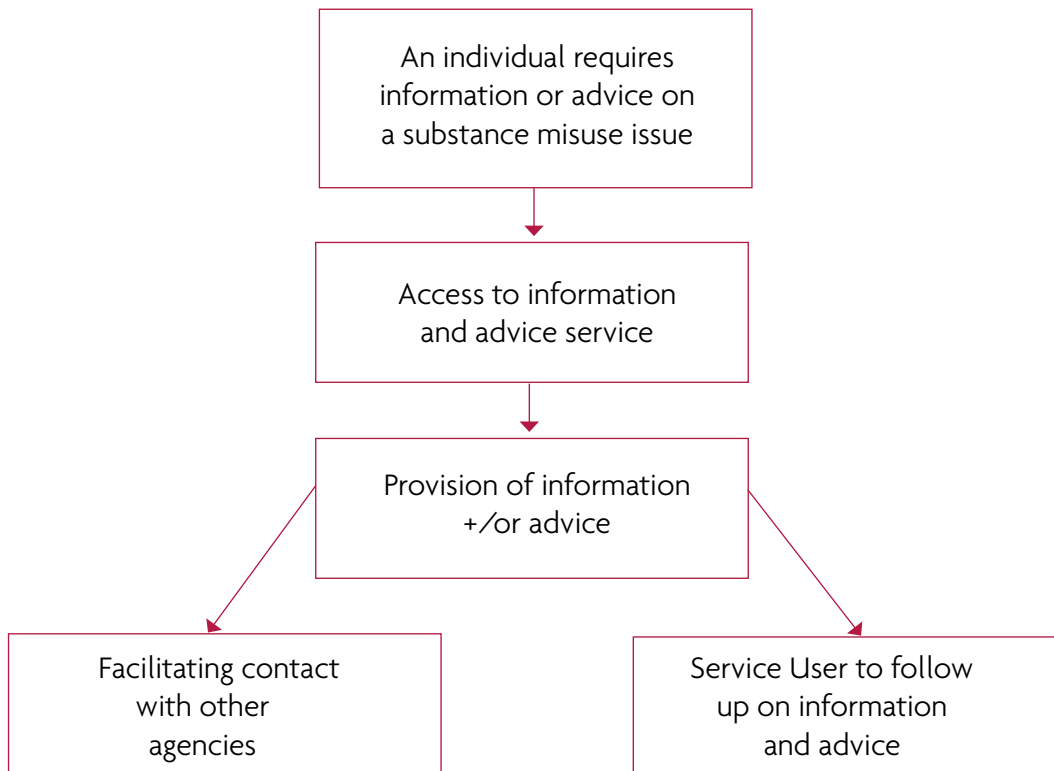
b. internet services:

- a regularly maintained and up to date website;
- a website that is easy to access, coherent and clear in its presentation of information;
- the web address is widely advertised ensuring that clients are aware of it Provides clients with links to other services and phone numbers.

c. telephone services:

- a dedicated telephone line(s);
- the number to be widely advertised.

10.3 A probable care pathway for the delivery of information and advice services is:



11 Standards and Monitoring

11.1 This Module can only set out standards for services delivered through specialist substance misuse services and not for those other services such as housing and benefit information and advice services. In respect of these any issues regarding the standard of service delivery would have to be dealt with through established links.

11.2 The following standards should be applied to the delivery of information and advice services:

a. Service and Commissioning Standards

No.	Standard	Monitoring Methods
1.	Competent and fully trained staff	Matching against National Standards and organisations job descriptions (see below)

No.	Standard	Monitoring Methods
2.	Information must be up to date and reviewed and updated regularly	Regular review of material against changes to service specifications and outlook of services. There will need to be effective change notification systems
3.	The setting of clear, focussed key objectives, that relate to the service requirements set out here, as part of the organisation's mission statement	Matching of achievement against objective. Annual reviewing and updating
4.	<p>Service users must be able to access and find the information they require to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) enable them to make informed decisions about their lifestyle b) enable them to make informed decisions about their treatment options c) enable them to take action to resolve other life issues not directly related to substance misuse 	Annual customer satisfaction review
5.	Service users should be able to access complete information about services including accessibility, service criteria, service type as well as information about self-help and advocacy groups	Annual audit of information and annual request for updated information from local services
6.	<p>Service users must be able to access and find the information they require in a manner that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) age appropriate b) takes account of any barriers that might exist (eg rurality, disability) c) is easy to access 	Annual customer satisfaction review
7.	Information and advice services should be available both during and out of normal office hours	<p>Annual customer satisfaction review</p> <p>Monitoring of service opening times</p>
8.	Services must be responsive to changing technologies and service delivery opportunities to ensure that they are available and appeal as widely as possible	Commissioners and providers to review at least annually

b. Staffing Standards

The following Drug and Alcohol National Standards may be used to identify required staff competencies and skills and utilised for training and development:

Code	Title
AA1	Recognise indications of substance misuse and refer individuals to specialists
AA3	Support individuals to access and use services and facilities
AA4	Promote the equality, diversity, rights and responsibilities of individuals
AA5	Interact with individuals using telecommunications
AA6	Promote choice, well-being and the protection of all individuals
AD1	Raise awareness about substances, their use and effects
AD4	Develop and disseminate information and advice about substance misuse, health and social well-being

12 Management, Administration and Commissioning Standards

12.1 Service providers will need to ensure that there is sufficient management and administrative support to aid the proper delivery of information and advice services. If the service is part of a larger substance misuse service then their needs to be sufficient resources dedicated to the management and administration of the information and advice service. The administration of such services can be time intensive in respect of ensuring that information is contemporary, distributed as required and relevant links maintained.

12.2 It is recommended that the service is clear regarding its aims and objectives. One method of this is through having a clear mission statement. Within this mission statement the role of advisory services can be clearly defined. This would then allow sufficient allocating of staff and resources to the advisory service, especially if the service also provides interventions or consultations.

13 Future Developments

13.1 As technology advances and becomes cheaper, planners and commissioners will need to ensure that they are positioned to take full advantage of these developments as they arise. This may include such things as video links or an increasing use of online media would make a number of services available. Video linking would allow for face to face consultation without the need for staff or service user to leave their respective areas helping to overcome rural and access issues as well as maintaining privacy.

13.2 Already on the web we see the integration of advertisements for advisory services, such as FRANK, on web pages. The increasing availability and numbers accessing the net will enable such “adverts” to be employed on a greater scale and across a greater range of clients. In some sense providing non-geographically fixed advisory services. In the long run such online services as already mentioned would be more cost effective, though the issue of quality control still remains. There is

a need to ensure that service users are being provided with clear and accurate information. Methods such as those discussed in the standards and monitoring will help to ensure that service users are well informed. From the 1st September 2006, Wales' first national helpline, which seeks to provide 24 hour advice to substance misusers and anyone seeking advice or information, was established. In addition the helpline will enable service users access local treatment and support services (www.cais.co.uk.org/pages/newsinformation/dan.htm). At this time DAN exists purely as a phone line with no supporting or allied website.

13.3 Some of these technologies already exist and it is important that services are as attractive and accessible to people of all age groups as they can be.

13.4 In addition the exact defining of information and advisory services needs to be clearer and agreed. The information and advice field is a very large one and in the this module considers only a number of the aspects of the information and advice field relevant to the particular delivery of information and advice within the substance misuse sector.

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