



What are the experiences and perspectives of adults who are accessing secondary care psychological therapy for anxiety or depression?

Full list of recommendations for future audits



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Purpose of this document

People with personal experience of accessing care for anxiety and depression have been involved from the start of the audit. A Service User and Carer Reference Group contributed to decisions about what data should be collected helped develop tools to measure service performance.

Once the analysis of the qualitative data from the audit had been conducted, the Service User and Carer Reference Group was invited to discuss the results and offer thoughts on how the findings related to their own experiences. The audit team drafted recommendations based on this initial Service and Carer Reference Group meeting, and these were further refined in an e-consultation sent to both the Service User and Carer Reference Group and the Steering Group.

These recommendations are detailed throughout the [report](#) and the full list can be found in this document.



Accessibility

Therapy was not easily accessible for service users. They reported issues with how quickly they were able to access therapy and difficulties meeting service thresholds. Once they started sessions, service users reported issues with their frequency and physical access to the location, as well as with funding and resources.

- a) Future audits should ask service users whether they were given a choice about the time of their appointment.
- b) Future audits should assess how easy service users found it to access the service.



Therapist

The personal attributes of a therapist and their behaviour and rapport with the service user were considered a key influence on the experience of therapy.

- a) Future audits should ask therapists and services about what information is provided to service users who experience difficulties with their therapy.
- b) Future audits should ask service users about what help they received if they experienced difficulties with their therapy and how useful this was.



Therapy content

Service users emphasised the importance of the content of the therapy sessions, including the type of therapy sessions, including the type of therapy they received and the information they were provided about the therapeutic approach and journey.

- a) Future audits should ask therapists how service user needs and preferences are taken into account when planning the number and frequency of appointments.



Continuity of care

Service users reported experiencing a lack of onward care, which led to feelings of abandonment and loneliness.

- a) Future audits should include a standard on providing service users with information about how they can access further support after discharge.



Communication

A lack of communication between services and between service and service user exacerbated many of the problems experienced, with service users feeling disenfranchised and not listened to.

- a) Future audits should develop a standard which looks at the means of communication between service users, services and therapists, including whether service users are asked how they would like to be contacted and updated about their therapy sessions.
- b) Future audits should explore whether service users are offered the opportunity to co-produce their discharge plan and letter, and whether they are offered a copy.



Physical environment

The physical environment in which therapy took place had an impact on the experience for service users, both positively and negatively.

- a) Future audits should ask service users how satisfied they were with the physical environment where they received their therapy.



Impact of therapy

The impact of therapy for individuals was polarised across the sample, with some having an extremely positive experience and others an extremely negative experience.

- a) Future audits should ask about the information provided to carers, including whether sufficient information was provided.
- b) Future audits should ask service users about the information they were provided about the potential impact of therapy (including possible negative effects) and how prepared they felt for therapy, and whether they were provided with enough information.
- c) Future audits should ask service users about how prepared they felt for ending therapy.



Control

Control of the therapy experience, or a lack of it, was a key factor determining the extent to which outcomes of therapy were successful. Because of this lack of perceived control, service users felt lucky if they had had a good experience.

- a) Future audits should ask service users about whether they felt they had influence over their therapy, including their level of involvement in decisions made about the type, number and frequency of therapy sessions and the times of their appointments.



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