



SNAP 2010

MENTAL HEALTH FINDINGS

Survey of Needs and Provision 2010

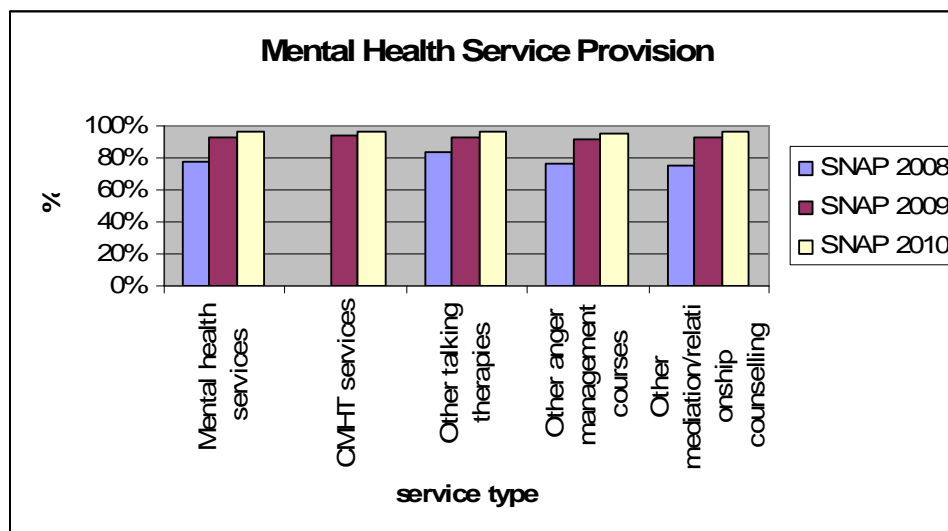
Each year Homeless Link carries out a survey looking at the needs of single homeless people and the service provision they receive. It's in its third year and to collect the data, 500 projects were surveyed including day centres, direct access hostels and 2nd stage accommodation projects. This briefing looks at one particular group of homeless people, those with mental health problems, and what provision is available.

91% of projects reported that at least some of the clients accessing their services had mental health problems, but only 17% of these projects reported specifically targeting services at this group of people.

Client Access to Specialist Mental Health Services

- 3% of day centres, hostels and second stage accommodation refuse access to individuals referred to them due to mental health problems
- 96% of projects reported being able to offer mental health services, 29% can do so in-house, 15% can do so in-house and 85% can refer to an external agency

There has been an 18% increase since 2008 in service availability overall for mental health services. This is true for all types of mental health services:



Problems Accessing Services

Despite there being an increase in service availability, access to mental health service remains to an issue for many projects. 57% of the projects that can access mental health services reported a problem in accessing it.

Of these, 33% reported client motivation being a problem, and 62% reported external services to be inadequate. Yet this needs to be viewed in the light of a 22% reduction in the number of projects reporting problems accessing external mental health services.

Mental Health Services identified as a gap in provision

Project managers were also asked what the biggest gap in service provision in their area was, and 19% of projects identified mental health services as the biggest gap in service provision.

Most of the 19% of services that reported a problem with mental health services referred to the long waiting times to get clients assessed, rather than the treatment received if any problems are identified. Some did mention issues around identifying problems, with assessments not confirming the symptoms or behaviours that hostel staff had been addressing. In addition, concerns around finding suitable housing for clients with mental health issues were also expressed.

'Mental health services - they might get treated at a mental health institute but then they are released straight onto the street. So then it's down to us to try helping them.'

'Mental health as although we can refer them to a mental health team they don't always identify the problems and so if they don't meet the criteria it puts you in an awkward position.'

In addition, the issues around mental health services taking responsibility for clients were also mirrored when looking at clients with multiple or complex needs:

'Mental health services, younger people suffer as they fall into the space between children and adult services. Nobody wants to take responsibility for some patients who need help. They are constantly passed from service to service.'

Mental Health Provision in Day Centres

Day centres see a higher proportion of clients with mental health problems, and are also more likely to be able to offer mental health care in-house, delivered by their own staff, than either hostels or 2nd stage accommodation projects. CMHT services are delivered by staff in-house in 16% of day centres compared with 3% of hostels, and other talking therapies are delivered in-house by their own staff in 29% of day centres, which only 16% of 2nd stage accommodation projects can offer. Despite this relatively high proportion of in-house health care, 57% of day centres receive no funds from Health agencies such as NHS Trusts or Primary Care Trusts. In addition, only 34% of day centres receive any funding from Supporting People.