



1. Introduction

The Scottish Government (SG) is focused on improving responses to people in distress. This focus arises from Commitment 19 of the Mental Health Strategy (2012 – 2015)¹ and theme A of the Suicide Prevention Strategy (2013 – 2016)². As part of this work, we are developing a brief intervention as a possible response to people who present in distress when accessing services.

2. Background

In support of the above commitment the SG led a two year national engagement process to seek the views of communities and partners, resulting in the publication of '**Distress Brief Intervention – description and proposed specification following stakeholder engagement**'. In addition the SG's Health Analytical Services undertook a review of the evidenced publishing, '**Distress Brief Interventions: Rationale and Evidence**', providing strong foundation for the next stage of the Programme. Both documents available via link below, under Commitment 1.³

3. Scottish Government Commitment

The Scottish Government made a financial commitment of up to a total of £4.2m, from the £150m announced for mental health, to support the 4 year Distress Brief Intervention Programme (DBI). Local NHS Boards and area partners were invited to express interest in hosting the Distress Brief Intervention Central Team of DBI Programme Manager, DBI Senior Data/ Information Analyst and DBI Administrator; and/or participate in the programme as one of the five DBI partnership test sites.

4. Distress Brief Intervention

DBI provides a framework for improved inter-agency co-ordination, collaboration and co-operation across a wider range of care, settings, interventions and community supports towards the shared goal of providing a compassionate and effective response to people in distress, making it more likely that they will engage with and stay connected to services or support that may benefit them over time.

¹ Scottish Government. *Mental Health Strategy 2012–15*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2012 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/08/9714>

² Scottish Government, *Suicide Prevention Strategy 2013-16*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2013 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/12/7616>

³ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Services/Mental-Health/Suicide-Self-Harm/SPS-IMG/SPSCommitments> (under Commitment 1).



The DBI will consist of 2 levels. Firstly, a compassionate frontline response, listening, assessing and signposting (provided by a range of front-line agencies); and secondly where appropriate, further contact, beginning within 24 hours for a 14 day maximum period (provided at community level, with a key role for third sector) of community support and where necessary, connecting with on-going community supports.

5. Development Phase: Present to June 2017

The DBI programme is now firmly in the development phase, focussed on developing all the supportive infrastructure elements, enabling the implementation phase to commence June 2017. Key Progress is listed below:

5.1 Host & Partnership Sites: The Minister for Mental Health, Maureen Watt MSP, announced the Scottish Government support for the DBI programme, the host organisation and five partnership sites on 19 July 2016 in Lanarkshire:



Host Organisation: Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire (H&SCNL) and South Lanarkshire Health & Social Care Partnership (SLH&SCP).

Partnership Test Sites: 1. Penumbra in Aberdeen, 2. Support in Mind in Inverness, 3. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and its constituent Health and Social Care Partnerships, 4. NHS Borders Joint Mental Health Service 5. Lanarkshire as above.

5.2 DBI Central Team (Lanarkshire): recruitment is at an advanced stage; accommodation, infrastructure and governance support is in place.

5.3 1st DBI Gathering of Partners 12 September: The Scottish Government and delivery partners came together on 12 September 2016 to co-ordinate and synchronise all elements of the programme in support of effective delivery of the programme.

5.4 National DBI Programme Board: The Scottish Government will establish a DBI Programme Board.

5.5 Developing the Distress Brief Intervention & Supporting Training: The University of Glasgow's Institute of Health & Well-being are leading a systematic programme of developing the DBI and supportive training, in preparation for the implementation phase commencing June 2017. It is important to note that the intervention does not currently exist.



5.6 'Evaluability Assessment', NHS Health Scotland are undertaking an evaluability assessment, which involves mapping out the links (or logic) between the proposed activities/ intervention and the anticipated short, intermediate and long term outcomes that the intervention is aiming to achieve. It will also form the basis of a brief for an independent evaluation of the intervention to be commissioned by Scottish Government.

5.7 Communication: Effective communication and involvement is essential to the delivery of the programme. The host communication department will provide programme support in the development of an overarching communications plan and on-going communication; this will include regular briefings for communities of interest across Scotland, who are interested in keeping up to date with the programme as it develops.

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