

Derwent Surgery - Audit of Next Steps Autumn 2009

Executive Summary

This study has evaluated financial saving/cost benefit to the PCT resulting from the support provided by Next Steps to its members. The study had two aims:-

1. To provide information about the usefulness/cost benefits of Next Steps in reducing pressure on hospital beds and formal clinic or GP appointments.
2. To provide information about the outcome of informal support within the range of treatments currently available in the field of mental health.

Information was quantified and evaluated by way of member interview/questionnaire and, for those members who are also patients of Derwent Surgery; answers were cross-checked by reference to surgery records.

Cost benefit to PCT was measured by way of reduction in the number of GP visits, A & E attendances, and "in patient" hospital days. Any savings resulting from reduction of the average length of GP visits, reduction of reliance on secondary support services, and reduction in emergency impact on other services have not been quantified here and amount to an additional benefit to the PCT and the community.

The average financial saving to the NHS/PCT is **£1427 per annum per member**, for each of the members taking part in the study.

The study also demonstrated a clear improvement in the mental health, and quality of life of its members, as measured by the Human Givens Needs scale. The main reason for improvement is probably that Next Steps provides a place where members are able to develop skills and express themselves in an atmosphere of encouragement, free from the stigma often associated with mental illness.

Next Steps has a total membership of 70, with 40 members attending the main base at Norton, Malton or one of the outreach centres at Pickering or Kirkbymoorside on a regular, weekly basis. There is currently no formal referral structure from local surgeries or mental health out-patient clinics. Were a more formal system in place, it is likely that membership would increase substantially.

Current annual savings to the PCT therefore vary between a conservative **£28,540** (if the saving were made for as few as 20 members) up to **£99,890** (if the same saving were made for all members). If membership were to be increased via a formal referral service (and there is capacity within the service) these savings, **amounting to a genuine reduction in spend across the PCT**, would be increased substantially.