

An evaluation of Via's IPS into Work Service

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Background aims

To evaluate an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) employment service delivered by Via (formerly WDP) for clients with drug and alcohol use issues regards:

- IPS service's impacts on clients' employment, wellbeing, substance recovery, participation and attitudes;
- Client's perceptions of the IPS service, its impacts and key characteristics;
- Perspectives of IPS provider staff and key local stakeholders on IPS experiences and success factors.

Methods

A mixed methods strategy was adopted.

Quantitative data from 718 IPS clients were analysed covering Jan 2019 to March 2022.

Descriptive and multivariate quantitative analyses were used.

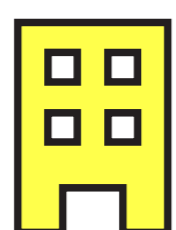
27 interviews were conducted with IPS provider staff, co-located drug and alcohol treatment staff, IPS clients, local drug and alcohol commissioners, an external IPS expert and an employer.

Results

- The IPS service showed strong employment impacts in terms of job entry, hours worked and sustainment;
- There is notable local variation in employment impacts and this maps onto differing strengths of local integration between the IPS service and co-located drug and alcohol teams;
- Four pillars for a high quality IPS service are described: integration; fidelity; employer engagement; and Employment Specialists' personal qualities and relationships;
- Client feedback was overwhelmingly positive and clients showed benefits across a wide range of broader recovery, wellbeing and attitudinal measures.



718 IPS clients were analysed



Referrals across **8** local authorities



Having received IPS support **30%** of clients moved into paid work

"Good outcomes for a new service and during COVID pandemic"
Professor Adam Whitworth



75% of job entries were **16+** hours per week

"I even get a little bit emotional about how much they helped me, you know, and at a time in my life that I was really, really struggling."

Conclusions

The research provides consistent evidence of the employment, substance recovery and broader social and wellbeing benefits of the IPS employment service. It also highlights local variation in effects as well as critical success factors that shape IPS success locally.

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Strathclyde's University Ethics Committee.
The authors have no conflict of interest. The presenter works for Via, the organisation delivering the IPS service.

