

## The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Clinical Guideline on Depression and anxiety

### What are the NICE Depression and Anxiety Guidelines?

- ★ The two guidelines were published in December 2004 in tandem with the report on the safety of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) produced by the Committee on Safety for Medicines.
- ★ In each guideline, the recommendations are set out in a framework which aims to provide the most effective and least intrusive interventions first (often referred to as a stepped care approach).
- ★ Developed by two separate groups, each guideline contains evidence-based recommendations for clinical practice, which focus on clinical treatment in both primary and secondary care.

### Local Priorities:

Camden and Islington PCTs are working with the Camden and Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust and the North Central Strategic Health Authority to support staff locally in implementing these NICE Mental Health Guidelines. The Depression and Anxiety Project Group, led by Dr Judith Dixon, has membership from both primary and secondary care, and aims to develop implementation plans focusing on a number of the key priorities from the guideline. These include:

### Local Key priorities from the Depression and Anxiety guidelines:

- Promote appropriate diagnosis for the different levels of depression – mild/moderate/severe.
- Support GPs to reduce the prescription of antidepressants for mild depression as the risk benefit ratio is poor, and to develop a range of alternative interventions such as exercise and Guided Self Help.
- Build the **Stepped Care Approach** into practice and encourage the 'Two Week Review' to follow up with all patients who have been prescribed antidepressants.
- Increase the availability of psychological therapies for depression and anxiety
- Ensure access to combined psychological and pharmacological treatments for treatment-resistant and initial severe depression, and focus on providing CBT.
- Create a template for an effective data monitoring system to be put into place across practice registers

### What does this mean for practices in Camden and Islington?

GP's current practice in Camden and Islington is already in line with the guideline in many areas. The Depression and Anxiety Project Group will work closely with the Primary Care Mental Health Development Teams and consult with local GPs to develop strategies for building on this good work to support GPs in providing the best evidence-based care possible:

### Steps may include:

- Raising awareness of the guidelines and their recommendations within practices with support from prescribing advisors.
- Developing an Individual learning pack for primary care professionals to support development of their knowledge of the guideline recommendations including a multiple choice questionnaire and an interactive learning tool.
- Building on the successful programme of Guided Self-Help delivered by primary care mental health workers.

### How do I find out more or get Copies of the Guidelines?:

- \* The **Quick reference guides** for depression and anxiety give a summary of the guidelines for healthcare professionals
- \* The **full versions of the guidelines** contain details of all the evidence and reasons behind the clinical recommendations.
- \* The **information for the public** booklets are useful versions for people with depression or anxiety, their carers and the public
- \* Copies of all of these are available to view on the NICE website site under [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk). For further information, or to request hard copies of the guideline please contact the project manager Anna Cobb on 020 7530 3148