Guideline title: Learning disabilities initial assessment and referral process for prisoners at HMP Bedford

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Summary: Initial assessment & screening tool by education staff, referral process pathway into mental health Inreach team

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1. Introduction
This piece of work has been undertaken in order to provide the highest possible standard of through care to prisoners at HMP Bedford who have a learning disability.

2. Learning Disabilities

The Department of Health definition of a learning disability includes the presence of:

- “A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intellectual functioning) with;
- A reduced ability to cope independently (impairment of adaptive/social functioning)
- Which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development” (Valuing People, DOH, 2001).

3. Assessment of learning disabilities

Intellectual functioning markedly below average (around IQ 70 or less) and difficulty functioning in 2 or more of the following areas would be expected in order to produce a diagnosis:

- Communicating
- Caring for self
- Living at home
- Relating to others
- Directing self
- Using community resources
- Academic functioning
- Working
- Health and safety
- AND that the condition started before the age of 18 (DSM4, 1995)

The Department of Health (Valuing People, DOH, 2001) also state that the use of IQ scoring alone is not adequate reason to put care pathways in place to offer specialist support. Assessment of social functioning and communication should also be considered (Theobald, 2005).

4. Induction
During induction prisoners carry out various screening and assessments that help determine their literacy and numeracy abilities, in order to support individuals increase their educational knowledge and skills. Support and assistance is given to all prisoners who enter HMP Bedford, whether it be through an information, advice and guidance session, specific education or skills based qualifications or gaining experience through work and other activities. To ensure equality of opportunity all prisoners are given the opportunity to sit an initial assessment to identify their literacy and numeracy needs. Some prisoners may struggle with any basic assessment we may conduct during induction, this could be due to a physical disability, hidden disability, language barrier or even lack of schooling or education in the prisoners past. Other screening or assessment tools are available throughout the prisoner journey at HMP Bedford. Tools such as:

5. Initial Assessment

A basic screening tool that identifies prisoner’s literacy and numeracy needs from below entry to Level 1.

Initial assessment is a general term used in further education to refer to the formal and/or informal processes of identifying appropriate learning programmes for individual students. Such processes may relate to ascertaining the right level of programme within a chosen curriculum area. It may refer to whether or not individual students are deemed in need of other learning support.

The initial assessment currently identifies the following:

Below entry – shows little literacy or numeracy skills
Entry 1 – identifies that the learner is working towards the equivalent of about the age of a 6 to 7 year old SATS e.g. Know alphabet but have difficulties reading
Entry 2 - identifies that the learner is working towards the equivalent of about the age of a 8 to 9 year old SATS e.g. Level 2 – Can read, but difficulties with writing, spelling and grammar
Entry 3 - identifies that the learner is working towards the equivalent of about the age of a 10 to 12 year old SATS (pre GCSE) e.g. Level 3 - Can read and write but need to improve skill for return to learning/employment
Level 1 – is equivalent to GCSE grade D to F
Level 2 – is equivalent to GCSE grade A to C

6. Target Skills
Target Skills is a suite of resources that is carried out on entry to education classes and gives a better insight into prisoner’s abilities and where support, help and guidance is required. This initial assessment also extends from below entry to level 2.

Target Skills provides an ICT-based initial assessment, a series of ICT learning materials, and a web-based management and tracking system for those delivering the national curricula in adult literacy and numeracy. It assesses learners against the national standards and curricula at Entry 1, 2, 3 and Levels 1 and 2. This forms the basis of a learner’s learning programme, and provides guidance to learners and tutors on the appropriate level to begin using Target Skills learning materials. Tutors can generate a learning plan with direct links to these materials.

7. Referral Process

Referrals relating to inmates in HMP Bedford can be made to the Community Mental Health Inreach Team via letter, email, telephone, fax or via system one (prison healthcare staff only) from the following sources:

- Community Mental Health or Learning Disabilities teams
- Other prisons
- Outside GP
- Reception staff
- Wing staff
- Prison Medical Officer
- Healthcare Staff
- All other prison staff

Prisoners will be assessed by a member of the Community mental health Inreach team. If required, a referral for a specialist learning disabilities assessment will be forwarded to the prisoners local health authority.
8. References

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (1995), 4th Edition

Department of Health (2005) Procedure for the transfer of prisoners to and from hospital under sections 47 & 48 of the ‘Mental Health Act’ (1983)
