

Care Programme Approach

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Care Programme Approach (CPA) is a United Kingdom system of delivering community services to those with mental illness. It was introduced to England in 1991 and by 1996 become a key component of the mental health system in England. The approach requires that health and social services assess need, provided a written care plan, allocate a care coordinator, and then regularly review the plan with key stakeholders, in keeping with the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990.

History and impact

In 1999 the approach was simplified to standard and enhanced levels, the term key worker was changed to care coordinator, and there was an emphasis on risk management, employment and leisure, and the needs of the carer.

There is some criticism that the approach has changed the role of staff away from implementing clinical interventions into administrative tasks, that the policy is carried out inconsistently, and has not been well aligned to clinical models of case management. Formal review on the impact and effectiveness of this initiative has been difficult because of the variation of clinical interventions given under a CPA model.