

A checklist for people with mental health problems

Working in partnership with psychiatrists and carers

Questions to ask the psychiatrist

This checklist suggests some questions you may want to ask about your:

- Illness
- Treatment
- Care

You may be able to get some of this information from other members of the team who are involved in your care.

Not everyone will need all the answers to all these questions, and not all at the same time. You may have questions that are not covered in this leaflet. Even so, it should help you decide what you do need to know.

About the illness

- What illness (diagnosis) do I have?

If a diagnosis has been made

- What are the symptoms that suggest this diagnosis?
- What tests have already been done?
- Are there any other tests that might be needed?
- Have any physical problems been found, and what will need to be done about them?

- Why has this happened to me?
- Will I get better?
- Where can I get written information about my problem?

If a diagnosis has NOT YET been made

- What are the possible diagnoses you are considering?
- What tests have already been done?
- Are there any other tests that might be needed?

About care and treatment

- What are the aims of my care and treatment?
- Where can I get written information about the treatment I will have/am having?
- Who will be responsible for my care (named nurse/care co-ordinator/ keyworker)? What exactly will they do? How often will they see me?
- Who else will be involved in my treatment?
- How often will the psychiatrist see me?
- What are the plans for my treatment? Do I have any choice?
- How long will the treatment take?
- Would talking treatments (e.g. cognitive behavioural

therapy, family therapy) of any sort be helpful? If so, will they be available in my area?

- What happens if I refuse to have the suggested treatment?
- Are there any ways I can help myself?

Care Programme Approach (CPA)

- What is the CPA?
- Am I on the CPA? If not, why not?
- Who is responsible for organising it?
- What difference will this make to me?

If I am not satisfied with my treatment and care, who do I speak to?

- To make comments
- To get a second opinion
- To make a complaint

Getting Help

- How can I get in touch with you, especially if I am not in hospital?
- How can I arrange to see you?
- What do I do if I am worried that I am becoming ill?
- Who do I contact in an emergency?
- Are there any local support, self-help or advocacy groups that I could get in touch with?



Carers and my treatment

- My carer(s) is/ are
- Will my carer be involved in discussions concerning my care and treatment?
- Does my carer have to be involved in discussions about **every detail** of my care?
- Can I decide that my carer may know only about **some details** of my care and treatment?
- How can it help to have my carer involved in discussions about me?
- Can I refuse to allow my carer to be involved in any of these discussions?

Medication Issues

- What medication am I on?

What should the benefits of this medication be?

- In the short-term
- In the long-term

What are the possible side-effects of this medication?

- In the short-term
- In the long-term

Managing the medication

- Why have you chosen this particular medication?
- How long will I have to take it for?
- Are there any other medications that could be used if this one does not work?
- Is the lowest effective dose being prescribed?
- What symptoms would mean the dose should be changed?
- Can I take a low dose and

increase it when necessary?

- Why am I on different types of medication?
- How often will my medication be reviewed?
- What shall I do if I have unpleasant side-effects?
- What will happen if I stop the medication?
- Do you have any written information about this medication?

Hospital treatment

- Do I need to be admitted to hospital? If so, for how long?
- If I have to go into hospital, which one will it be?
- What arrangements will be made for me after I leave hospital?

If not admitted to hospital

- If I am not admitted to hospital and my carer cannot look after me, who will care for me?
- If my carer needs support, where can they get it?

Self-help

- What can I do to help myself get better?
- How can I contact other people who have been through the same experiences?

Any other questions
