

FACTFILE: GCE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

A2 5: SUPPORTING THE FAMILY



Supporting the Family

Students should be able to:

- investigate and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the support offered by health and social care services including the:
 - statutory sector (for example services such as health centres, hospitals, respite care or fostering);
 - private sector (for example organisations such as private health centres, hospitals, respite care or nursing homes); and
 - voluntary sector (for example Parenting NI, Women's Aid, Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, Aware NI, Relate NI, National Society for The Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) or Cruse Bereavement).



Course Content

A wide range of services offer support to families. This support is available to support families facing issues such as relationship problems, illness or bereavement. This support is offered by the statutory, private, and voluntary sectors. The private and voluntary sectors are also referred to as the independent sector.

Statutory sector

These services are provided by the health and social care trusts and are usually free at the point of delivery. There are six health and social care trusts in Northern Ireland:

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
- Northern Health and Social Care Trust;
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust;
- Southern Health and Social Care Trust;
- Western Health and Social Care Trust; and
- The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

The trusts provide a wide range of services in the community, in hospitals and at home. The support offered includes adult, children's, disability, mental health and older people's services. The services offered vary from trust to trust and are very dependent on the funding available.

Activity 1

Working in groups access the website of your local health and social care trust to find out the services they offer under the following headings:

- adults';
- children's;
- disability;
- mental health; and
- older people's services.

Health centres



Health centres provide valuable support to families as they provide a wide range of services for adults and children. Most GPs are located in health centres. One of the main ways a health centre supports families is in the diagnosis and treatment of illness. When a family member is ill they usually visit the health centre and will be examined by a GP or nurse practitioner who will provide a diagnosis and prescribe treatment or refer the individual to a hospital for further tests or treatment. Most health centres offer other services which provide support to the family and these may include antenatal and postnatal care, minor surgery, and clinics such as asthma, CHD, hypertension, well woman/man, family planning, baby, diabetes, drug monitoring (e.g. warfarin), mental health and vaccinations. Some GP practices provide an online appointments booking or repeat prescription service (via their practice websites). Other health practitioners such as social workers, physiotherapists and pharmacists are often based in GP practices to provide more community based care and support.

Most health centres also offer nursing support through health visitors and district nurses. The services promote the health of family members.

Consider how a health centre may support a family member who suspects they may have asthma. The individual will make an appointment with their GP who will discuss their symptoms, medical history and carry out some tests. These tests may include peak flow, spirometry, airways responsiveness, allergy or FeNO. If asthma is diagnosed then the GP will prescribe asthma medicines, which are usually taken using inhalers. Regular follow up appointments will be made to monitor the effectiveness of the treatment. The treatment may be modified to keep the condition under control and enable the individual to lead a full and unrestricted life. The individual may also attend an asthma clinic in the health centre where specialist help and advice are available.

Activity 2

Visit your local health centre or its website and compile a list of the services offered. In small groups discuss how these services may support families.

Hospitals



Hospitals also provide a wide range of services which offer support to families usually in times of illness including inpatient and outpatient care. Large acute hospitals such as The Royal Victoria Hospital have an Accident and Emergency Department which provides support when a family member is facing an emergency such as loss of consciousness, severe chest pain, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding, or severe burns. A wide range of other services are available in hospitals to support the health and well-being of family members. Services may include cardiology, general surgery, gynaecology, ophthalmology (eye care) dermatology, respiratory medicine, and vascular rheumatology and cancer services.

Other hospitals may offer specialist support to families who have a member experiencing mental illness or requiring rehabilitation following serious injury or trauma.

Within all these hospitals a wide range of health care professionals offer support to the family including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers, speech and language therapists and counsellors.

A pregnant woman may attend antenatal appointments at a hospital to check that she and developing baby are well. A midwife or doctor will carry out various tests, for example check the urine and blood pressure of the mother-to-be or listen to the baby's heartbeat or carry out an ultrasound scan. Advice will be given to help ensure a healthy

pregnancy. Many women give birth in a maternity unit in a hospital where midwives and obstetricians are on duty to help ensure a safe delivery. After the birth further support and advice is offered, for example newborn screening tests or advice on caring for the baby.

Residential care homes

Another way the statutory sector supports families is through the provision of residential care provided in residential homes run by health and social care trusts. A considerable number of older people require residential care. They may need a high level of personal care which they may be unable to get at home. There are different types of care provided in residential homes, including personal care for physically frail older people, nursing care and specialist care for people with dementia.

The focus in residential care is on the delivery of personal and social care services which includes assistance with meals, bathing, dressing, washing and providing emotional support.

Residential care provides valuable support to a family who have perhaps an elderly relative who has Alzheimer's disease or who has become very frail or has limited mobility and requires 24 hour care.

A family member who has a learning disability may also receive support as residential care is also available for adults with learning disabilities. This provides a valuable source of support for the family.

A family who has a child with a learning disability who presents challenging behaviour may also receive support through residential care provided by the health and social care trusts.

Activity 3

Produce a summary of the residential care provided by the health and social care trust in your area for:

- young people;
- older people;
- specialist care e.g. people with dementia;
- children; and
- people with mental health, learning disability, physical disability.

Respite Care

Some families may be providing full time care for a family member. For example, the family could be caring for a severely disabled child or for a husband/wife who has multiple sclerosis. Providing full time care is very demanding and respite care gives the carer/s an opportunity to take a holiday, have a break or simply have some time to themselves or with their family.

Respite care provides a short term break and examples include the person requiring care receiving caring breaks (weekly activities to the swimming pool or the cinema), family placements (spending a short time with another family) or spending one or two weeks in residential care. This type of support is valuable for all the family members.

Activity 4

In small groups consider how respite care may support a family caring for a teenager with complex learning and physical disabilities.

Day Centres

Another valuable source of support offered to families by the trusts is day care. This is delivered in day centres and focuses on providing a range of activities such as art and crafts, community based activities, health and leisure and in some cases access to further education. Day care can be accessed by older people, family members with a learning or physical disability or a mental illness. This support has many benefits for the family, such as increasing the independence and raising self-esteem for the attendee and helping the family cope in their caring role.

Social Work

Within the trusts social work is a key element of:

- family and childcare services;
- learning disabilities services;
- mental health services;
- physical disability services;
- older peoples services; and
- hospital social work services.

Social workers work with family members both children and adults who may be vulnerable as a result of disability or illness. They also work with those who have been neglected or abused. Social workers form relationships with families and assist them to find solutions to their problems. This may

also involve working with other organisations such as schools or the police to provide support to families who require it. Hospital social workers help patients, carers and families to deal with the consequences of illness and disability by providing advice, information and support.



Adoption and Fostering

One very important aspect of the support offered to families is adoption and foster care.

At times parents may be unable to care adequately for their children. This may be due to a lack of parenting skills or health related problems or the child may have a disability, and as a result abuse or neglect may occur. Fostering provides these children or young people with alternative family care. The benefit of this is that the child or young person should feel cared for, valued and respected. Fostering may be short term or long term and the aim is that the child or young person returns to their home and family when issues have been addressed and social workers play a crucial support role in this.

Unfortunately some children may require an adoptive family. These are usually children who have been in foster care and have been unable to return to their home and family. This can be for a number of reasons. Their parents may have addiction problems, poor physical or mental health or the children may be at risk of physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Adoption is a legal process where a child who cannot be brought up within the birth family becomes a legal and permanent member of a new family.

Social workers trained in adoption work play a crucial role in this process.

Activity 5

Consider how foster care and adoption may offer support to families. Make notes individually and then share your ideas in a small group.

Private Sector

These services are provided by organisations which aim to make a profit. Service users pay for the care provided either directly by payment or through an insurance scheme. Service users may use the private sector for various reasons, such as they may believe the quality of care delivered is better or they may want to avoid a long waiting list for treatments in the statutory sector.

The number of private sector healthcare services in Northern Ireland is increasing and includes:

Private clinics

These clinics can support families by providing healthcare and treatment in a wide range of areas including dermatology, general medicine, gynaecology, pain management, cardiology, orthopaedics, paediatrics and counselling. The care is usually delivered on an outpatient basis.

Private hospitals

These hospitals also provide healthcare for families and offer a wide range of services including health screening, allied health professionals and complementary therapies, orthopaedics, emergency medicine, specialist clinics, gynaecology, plastics and cosmetics, ear and eye care, dental services, occupational health, health tourism, pregnancy, cardiology, mental health and paediatric treatment, tests, scans and investigations such as MRI scans, X-rays, ultrasound, endoscopy and health checks. Surgery is also offered to treat a wide range of conditions and may include hip or knee replacements, gall bladder removal or a hysterectomy. Private casualty and GP services are also available in some of these hospitals.

Activity 6

Research either a private clinic or hospital and investigate the services provided and how they may support families.

Private GP Practices and private health centres

A small number of private health centres support families by providing GP consultations and treatments. The services offered are similar to

those offered by GPs and health centres within the Trusts but family members may choose the GP they wish to consult and the waiting time for appointments is much shorter, but the treatments are not free. A one hour GP consultation may cost £101. An example of opening times are Mon- Fri 9-8pm and Sat 9-5pm.

Private Practitioners

A number of other healthcare professionals and alternative practitioners offer support to the family within the private sector. Examples include physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, dentists, opticians and podiatrists. These support families by providing healthcare. Other practitioners offer complementary therapies such as reflexology, aromatherapy, reiki, chiropractic and acupuncture to the family. These practitioners may support the family by providing an alternate treatment to help manage an illness or reduce stress and promote relaxation.

Nursing homes, residential homes and respite care

The support offered to families by these services within the private sector is very similar to that in the statutory sector.

Before a person moves into a home they have a financial assessment with their H&SC Trust looking at income and capital to calculate how much they have to pay towards their home fees.

Voluntary Sector

A wide range of organisations within the voluntary sector offer valuable support to families. The services are usually free and the organisations have a particular focus, for example Mencap offers support to people with learning disabilities and their families.

Activity 7

Compile a list of voluntary sector organisations in your area and briefly outline the support they offer to families.

The support offered to families may include nursing care, respite care, information, advice, counselling, helplines and accommodation. There are numerous organisations and the work of a small number of them in supporting the family is outlined below.

Parenting NI

Parenting NI as the name suggests focuses

on parents. The focus of the organisation is on early intervention and prevention. One way they support families is through their parents' helpline. This helpline provides parents with information, guidance and counselling when they are experiencing difficulties. The organisation also provides a range of parenting programmes and runs a family wellness project which is an early intervention mental health project for children under 12 and their families.

Women's Aid

Women's Aid provides support to women and children who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse. The support they provide includes a free phone 24 hour National Domestic Helpline and a survivor's handbook which provides information and practical support for women experiencing domestic violence. They also operate a Survivor's Forum through a message board to enable women who have been affected by domestic violence to support one another by sharing their experiences.

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

As the name suggests this organisation provides support for families from ethnic minority groups in particular those who have been victims of racist incidents. The organisation aims to respond to the needs, promote the rights and represent the black and minority ethnic sector. The support offered includes helping families to make applications for housing, encouraging families to report and record racist incidents, and assisting with criminal injuries compensation claims. One important type of support given is advice and information.

Aware NI

This organisation provides support to people with depression and bipolar disorder. One way the organisation supports families is through support groups. Aware NI also delivers mental health and well-being programmes in schools, colleges, universities, workplaces and communities. They also provide Information Outreach sessions and attend community events raising awareness of the support available to individuals and families.

Relate NI

This organisation offers relationship support to families. One important form of support is relationship, family and children and young people's counselling. The organisation also provides sex therapy and workshops for people experiencing problems in this aspect of their relationships.

NSPCC

One important way this organisation supports families is through their service centres. In these centres staff help families where drug and alcohol misuse is a problem. They also work to protect children from neglect and abuse. Through the NSPCC schools service children are made aware of the different types of abuse, told how to keep themselves safe and how to speak out if they are worried about anything. The NSPCC helpline provides support to adult family members who may have concerns about a child and their Childline service provides counsellors to talk to children about problems they are facing.

Cruse Bereavement Care

This organisation provides support to families after the death of someone close to them. The support offered includes booklets and fact sheets on grief and bereavement. Following bereavement a family member may need someone outside the family to talk to and this organisation provides an opportunity to do so, either by telephone or face-to-face with bereavement support volunteers. Some branches of the organisation offer support to children and young people.

SOURCES

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