

Expert welcomes new schizophrenia guidance

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Dr Craig Steel, Deputy Director of the University of Reading's Charlie Waller Institute for Evidence Based Psychological Treatments and an expert on schizophrenia, welcomes National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Schizophrenia [quality standard](#) but says the NHS must now act on it.

"I welcome NICE's new guidance. Schizophrenia can be devastating for sufferers and their families with around 1% of the world's population having the condition. As well as the personal cost its economic ramifications are huge - research shows society loses £12 billion pounds per annum through costs to the NHS, benefit payments and loss of skills.

"Although historically considered a medical illness, this assumption is being questioned. There is now a large body of recent evidence suggesting that symptoms associated with schizophrenia are a reaction to social problems and psychological distress.

"Many people who are diagnosed with schizophrenia do not respond to taking medication. Therefore a key aspect of today's announcement is NICE's recommendation that psychological intervention continues to be a part of frontline services, and that it will be routinely offered to people who are diagnosed. However effective intervention depends on having highly-skilled clinicians. The NHS must listen to NICE and invest more in more training.

"Cognitive-behavioural and other evidence-based therapies, such as family therapy, are still developing as interventions for [schizophrenia](#).

With the Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, the Charlie Waller Institute is conducting a programme of cutting-edge research aimed at developing shorter, more targeted interventions.

"These will be more attractive to patients and easier to deliver on the NHS. This should mean more people with the condition receiving potentially life-changing treatment."

Provided by University of Reading

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