

# Coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse: assessment and management in healthcare settings overview

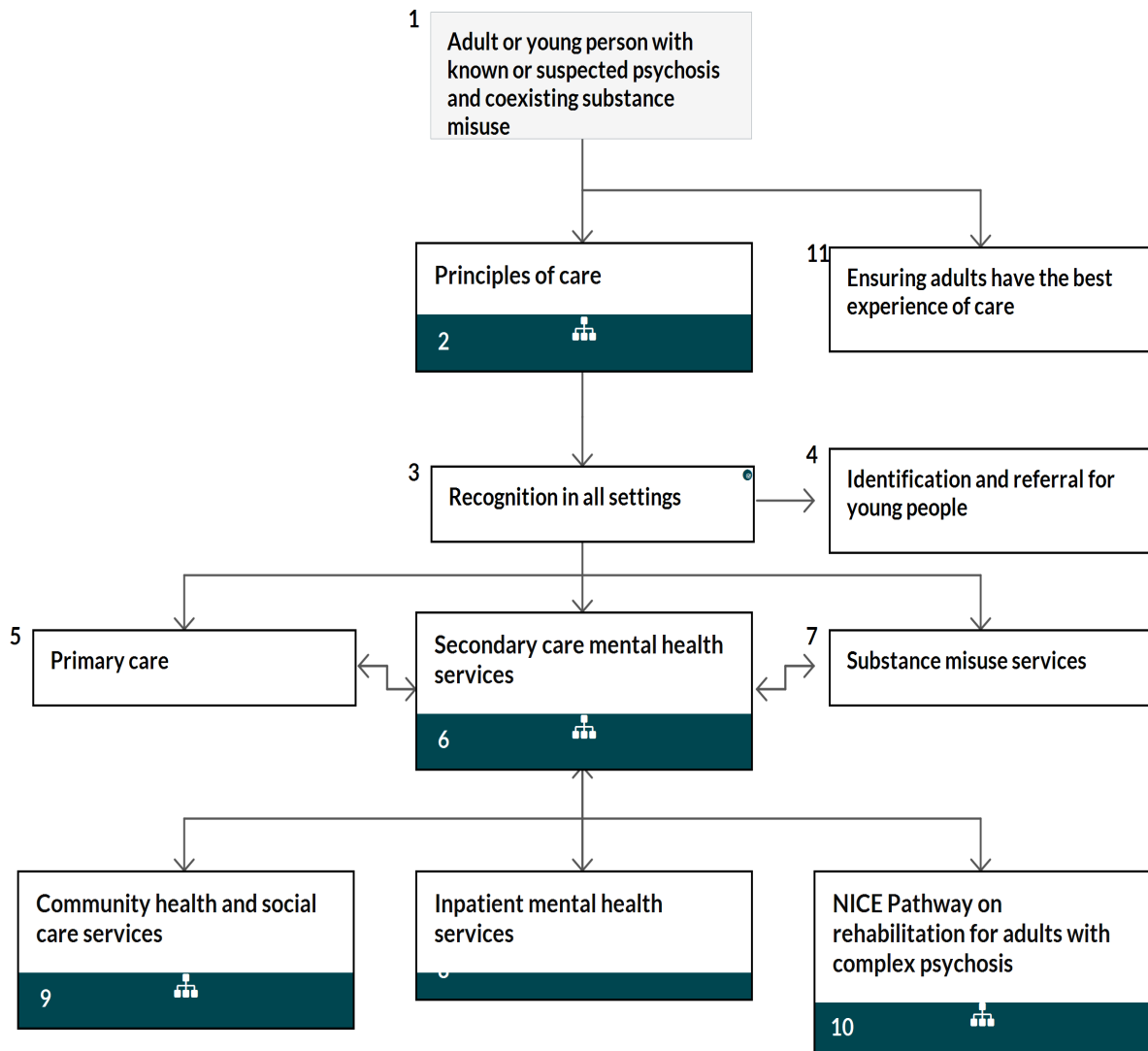
NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE says on a topic in an interactive flowchart. NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online.

They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this NICE Pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/coexisting-severe-mental-illness-and-substance-misuse-assessment-and-management-in-healthcare-settings>

NICE Pathway last updated: 19 August 2020

This document contains a single flowchart and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



## 1 Adult or young person with known or suspected psychosis and coexisting substance misuse

No additional information

## 2 Principles of care

See Coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse: assessment and management in healthcare settings / Principles of care for adults and young people with coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse in healthcare settings

## 3 Recognition in all settings

Healthcare professionals in all settings (including primary care, secondary care mental health services, CAMHS and accident and emergency departments, and those in prisons and criminal justice mental health liaison schemes) should routinely ask adults and young people with known or suspected psychosis about their use of alcohol and/or prescribed and non-prescribed (including illicit) drugs. If the person has used substances, ask them about all of the following:

- particular substance(s) used
- quantity, frequency and pattern of use
- route of administration
- duration of current level of use.

Conduct an assessment of dependency (see what NICE says on drug misuse management in over 16s and alcohol-use disorders), and seek corroborative evidence from families, carers or significant others, where possible and permission is given.

Healthcare professionals in all settings (including primary care, secondary care mental health services, CAMHS and accident and emergency departments, and those in prisons and criminal justice mental health liaison schemes) should routinely assess adults and young people with known or suspected substance misuse for possible psychosis. Seek corroborative evidence from families, carers or significant others, where possible and permission is given.

See also what NICE says on suicide prevention.

## Quality standards

The following quality statement is relevant to this part of the interactive flowchart.

1. Initial identification of coexisting substance misuse

### 4 Identification and referral for young people

Professionals in Tier 1 should seek advice or consultation from Tier 2 CAMHS when signs of psychosis are detected in young people. If healthcare professionals in Tier 2 CAMHS detect signs of psychosis in young people, a referral to Tier 3 CAMHS or early intervention in psychosis services for young people should be made according to local protocols.

Ask all young people seen in Tier 3 CAMHS and Tier 4 CAMHS and in early intervention in psychosis services who have psychosis or suspected psychosis about substance misuse (see recognition in all settings in this path).

Children and young people who are considered to be at high risk of harm to themselves or others should be referred directly to Tier 4 CAMHS including inpatient services where necessary.

### 5 Primary care

#### Referral from primary care

Refer to secondary care mental health services or CAMHS, for assessment and further management, all adults and young people with either of the following:

- psychosis or suspected psychosis, including those who are suspected of having coexisting substance misuse problems
- substance misuse or suspected substance misuse who are suspected of having coexisting psychosis.

#### Physical healthcare

Monitor the physical health of adults and young people with psychosis and coexisting substance misuse, as described in NICE's recommendations on [psychosis and schizophrenia](#). Pay particular attention to the impact of alcohol and drugs (prescribed and non-prescribed) on

physical health.

Monitor the person at least once a year or more frequently if there is a significant physical illness or there is a risk of physical illness because of substance misuse.

## 6 Secondary care mental health services

See Coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse: assessment and management in healthcare settings / Secondary care mental health services for adults and young people with coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse

## 7 Substance misuse services

### Assessment

Offer adults and young people with psychosis and coexisting substance misuse attending substance misuse services a comprehensive, multidisciplinary mental health assessment in addition to an assessment of their substance misuse.

### Joint working

Healthcare professionals in substance misuse services should be present at Care Programme Approach meetings for adults and young people with psychosis and coexisting substance misuse within their service who are also receiving treatment and support in other health services.

Specialist substance misuse services should provide advice, consultation and training for healthcare professionals in adult mental health services and CAMHS.

Specialist substance misuse services should work closely with secondary care mental health services to develop local protocols derived from this guideline. The agreed local protocols should set out responsibilities and processes for assessment, referral, treatment and shared care across the whole care pathway.

## 8 Inpatient mental health services

See Coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse: assessment and management in

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[healthcare settings / Inpatient mental health services for adults and young people with coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse](#)

## 9 Community health and social care services

[See Coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse: community health and social care services](#)

## 10 NICE Pathway on rehabilitation for adults with complex psychosis

[See Rehabilitation for adults with complex psychosis](#)

## 11 Experience of care

Use these recommendations with NICE's recommendations on:

- [patient experience in adult NHS services](#)
- [service user experience in adult mental health services](#).

## Glossary

### CAMHS

Child and adolescent mental health services

### Significant others

refers not just to a partner but also to friends and any person the service user considers to be important to them

### Tier 1

CAMHS Tier 1 refers to primary care and educational settings

### Tier 2

CAMHS Tier 2 refers to primary care

### Tier 3

CAMHS Tier 3 refers to community mental health

### Tier 4

CAMHS Tier 4 refers to specialist inpatient and regional services

## Sources

Coexisting severe mental illness (psychosis) and substance misuse: assessment and management in healthcare settings (2011) NICE guideline CG120

## Your responsibility

### Guidelines

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful

consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

## Technology appraisals

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, health professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients. The application of the recommendations in this interactive flowchart is at the discretion of health professionals and their individual patients and do not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to provide the funding required to enable the recommendations to be applied when individual health professionals and their patients wish to use it, in accordance with the NHS Constitution. They should do so in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of



implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

### **Medical technologies guidance, diagnostics guidance and interventional procedures guidance**

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account. However, the interactive flowchart does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the recommendations, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this interactive flowchart should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.