

# Care models for coexisting serious mental health and alcohol/drug conditions: the RECO realist evidence synthesis and case study evaluation

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## Plain language summary

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## Plain language summary

People who experience serious mental illness (the kind that affects people's daily life and needs long-term support) can also have problems with drugs and alcohol. This can affect access to care and treatment and result in a crisis. We wanted to develop a better understanding of how services could help those with co-occurring serious mental health and alcohol/drug conditions (or COSMHAD for short). To answer these questions, we carried out the following:

- We gathered information from publications to identify what treatments are available for co-occurring severe mental health and alcohol/drug conditions and which aspects of these were useful (evidence synthesis).
- We asked services across the United Kingdom about the local provision for people with co-occurring severe mental health and alcohol/drug conditions.
- We conducted focus groups in six locations with service users, carers and staff about their experiences of care for co-occurring severe mental health and alcohol/drug conditions.

### What we found

There are very few services in the United Kingdom that currently provide a service for people with co-occurring severe mental health and alcohol/drug conditions. We identified a set of factors that are likely to promote better outcomes for people with co-occurring severe mental health and alcohol/drug conditions including commitment from leaders across organisations to address this issue and support staff training. A local expert clinical leader was seen to be important in enabling closer working between mental health and substance use. Service users and carers recognised that when care was co-ordinated, and staff demonstrated empathy and compassion, they were more likely to engage in treatment.

Further work will be needed to evaluate how helpful some of the aspects of the models of care are in helping people in their recovery goals.

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## This article

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