Scottish Health Award Winner 2019

Distress Brief Intervention

Connected Compassionate Support

Programme Manager's Six Monthly Report
April 20 – September 20
Issue 8 (December 2020)

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SUMMARY

a. **Purpose:** The DBI Programme Manager is required to produce a six monthly progress report to the Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) Programme Board in support of the effective governance and implementation of the DBI programme. This is issue 8 covering the period April 2020 to September 2020. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic this report is provided in a summary format to enable the DBI programme and the frontline health and social care, emergency and third sector providers involved to focus their efforts on responding and adapting to the pandemic. This report builds on the previous reports which can be found at http://www.dbi.scot/resources/progress-reports/

b. **Mental Health Strategy**: The Scottish Government (SG) is focused on improving responses to people in distress[1].

c. **DBI Programme**: The Scottish Government established a pilot DBI programme, which is hosted by Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire (H&SCNL) and South Lanarkshire Health & Social Care Partnership (SLH&SCP). The DBI approach was initially being piloted over 53-months (November 2016 to March 2021) in four sites across Scotland, led by: 1. Penumbra in Aberdeen, 2. Support in Mind Scotland in Inverness, 3. Scottish Borders Health & Social Care Partnership, 4. North & South Lanarkshire as above.

d. **Programme for Government September 2018:** Building on the excellent progress of the initial pilot programme, the programme was extended during 2019 as part of Scottish Government's Programme for Government[2], across three complementary parts:

- **Part 1 Extension to 16-17 year olds**: following a period of engagement, review and development, the DBI programme extended to those aged 16 and 17 years in Lanarkshire and Scottish Borders in May 2019 and Aberdeen and Inverness in July 2019 for existing front-line pathways. In doing so it is increasing understanding of how DBI impacts on young people, families and local service provision in support of part 2 below. DBI is now delivered as standard to those aged 16 and over.
- **Part 2 Scoping DBI for 15 years and Younger:** programme commenced in October 2019, led by the University of Glasgow and supported through a DBI Children & Young People Advisory Group, to undertake a scoping exercise to review the applicability of DBI for those aged 15 years and younger to produce recommendations for consideration of further extension by April 2020. This strand of work was paused in March 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic however it resumed in June 2020, with recommendations set out in July 2020 to test the delivery of DBI in a controlled way for 14-15 year olds, which were approved by the DBI Programme Board. Development and planning is currently taking place in preparation to commence delivery in Lanarkshire and Aberdeen in January 2021.
- **Part 3: DBI Associate Programme**: a DBI associate programme has been established for other regions to benefit from the learning, infrastructure, training, tools and collaborations to embed DBI within existing programmes, with the first associate site (Moray) established and delivering DBI since July 2019. A number of H&SCPs expressed interest in the DBI programme during 2019 and were at varying stages of reflection, discussion and development. During the period following the immediate onset of the COVID 19 pandemic, the communication regarding the associate programme paused as both the DBI Central Team and regional areas focussed on the immediate and emergency planning required. However, communication and planning has been re-established across the regions who wish to progress, seeing DBI as even more important as part of the COVID

[1] Scottish Government. *Mental Health Strategy 2012–15*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2012: http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/08/9714

[1] Scottish Government, *Suicide Prevention Strategy 2013-16.* Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2013: http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/12/7616

[1] http://www.dbi.scot/resources/

[1] Scottish Government (2017) Mental Health Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027 – A 10 year vision, Edinburgh: Scottish Government: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00516047.pdf

[2] https://www.dbi.scot/general/scottish-government-support-to-expand-dbi-to-under-18s/

[2] Scottish Government, Programme for Government Delivery Plan: https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-delivery-plan-mental-health/pages/0/

19 recovery response in the months and years ahead. Significant progress has been made with NHS24 which is now a live DBI Associate Pathway. In addition, the DBI community is delighted to welcome, North, South and East Ayrshire (pan Ayrshire & Arran) and Inverclyde H&SCP's who will open their DBI services in January 2021 following a period of development. In addition, Angus, Perth & Kinross and Dundee City (pan Tayside) and Mid-Lothian H&SCPs have committed to complete development and open their DBI services in 2021. A further seven H&SCPs have formally expressed interest in being a DBI Associate and are at varying stages of discussion and development.

e. **COVID 19:** The incredible collaboration of the DBI community has seen DBI delivered remotely since the beginning of March 2020, whilst remaining faithful to the DBI specification and protecting the DBI workforce, ensuring the continued provision of DBI through this challenging time. The First Minister announce (on 14th April 2020) a national DBI COVID 19 Response. Since the 8th June 2020, anyone who phones the NHS24 Mental Health Hub in emotional distress from anywhere in Scotland *and* who does not need emergency clinical intervention *and* is assessed as appropriate for referral to DBI, can now be referred to the DBI Programme for further support[3]. This enables more people across Scotland to benefit from the connected compassionate support DBI has created. The vision, collaborative culture and programme infrastructure has been harnessed in support of the effective delivery of the DBI COVID 19 response programme.[4]

f. **Scottish Governments 'Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland, the Governments Programme for Scotland, 2020-21' (published September 2020)** committed to *"extend the DBI programme across Scotland, for a transitional period to 2024, at which point we expect it to be fully embedded by Boards."* The DBI Programme Board is overseeing this transition, led by the DBI Central Team and supported by the DBI community.[5]

g. **DBI Aim:** The overarching aim of the DBI programme is to provide a framework for improved inter-agency co-ordination, collaboration and co-operation across a wide range of care settings, interventions and community supports, towards the shared goal of providing connected compassionate support to people presenting in distress.

h. **The DBI 'Ask Once Get Help Fast' Approach has Two Levels**. DBI Level 1 is provided by front line staff (Emergency Departments (ED), Police Scotland (PS), Primary Care and Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS)) and involves a compassionate response, signposting and offer of referral, seamlessly with confidence and clarity to a DBI Level 2 service. DBI Level 2 is provided by commissioned and trained third sector staff who contact the person within 24-hours of referral and provide compassionate community-based problem solving support, wellness and distress management planning, supported connections and signposting for a period of up to 14 days. The current DBI Level 2 providers are Life Link, The Richmond Fellowship Scotland, Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health, Support in Mind Scotland, Penumbra and Scottish Association for Mental Health.

i. **Governance:** A DBI Central Team of Programme Manager, Principal Data Analyst and Administrator has been established by the host organisation. The Scottish Government has established a national DBI Programme Board. Each of the four partnership sites and associate sites has established DBI Implementation Groups. SAS and PS have established DBI Implementation Groups. This structure has ensured that key stakeholders are involved and that local provision is embedded and connected with, and respectful of, related and complimentary programmes. A DBI COVID 19 Response Group has been established to co-ordinate and respond to the pandemic.

j. **Time-line:** The programme board has set out a time-line, which synchronises all programme elements. Improvement science underpins the approach through controlled and incremental implementation, which enables learning and continuous improvement throughout the duration of the programme with a more accurate picture of 'real time' demand and capacity.

k. **Evaluation:** The DBI collaborative evaluation team of the Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit at the University of Stirling, ScotCen, The Mental Health Foundation and Glasgow Caledonian University published the first interim evaluation report in

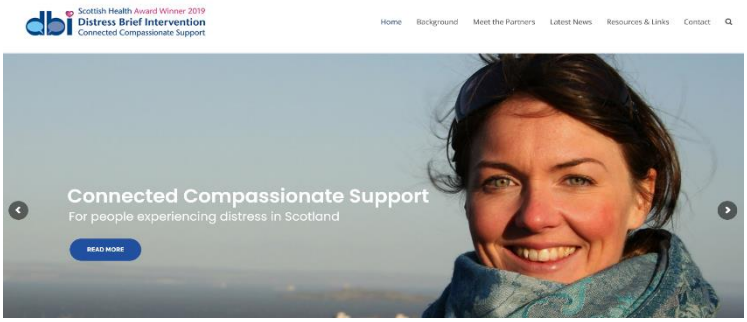
[3] https://www.dbi.scot/general/dbi-helping-people-cope-during-covid-19/
[4] https://www.dbi.scot/resources/briefing-papers/
[5] https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotland-renewing-scotland-governments-programme-scotland-2020-2021/

January 2020[6]. The evaluation team have now concluded both the qualitative and quantitative data capture and analysis is being undertaken on an ongoing basis, with a strong focus on integrating and synthesising statistical and qualitative data in support of the final evaluation, due spring 2021. A revised Public Benefit & Privacy Panel application was submitted, requiring a considerable amount of preparation time because of new forms and requirements. Approval in support of the data linkage was gained on the 4th December and the evaluation team are working closely with Public Health Scotland in support of data transfer time-scales. The economic evaluation will be a key focus in the next reporting period. The Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit at the University of Stirling will undertake the evaluation of DBI COVID 19 response. The DBI COVID evaluation has successfully met or exceeded its recruitment targets. The smaller DBI COVID team will now move on to analysing qualitative data and comparing this with qualitative data from the wider project, as well as with aggregated outcome data from DBI Central for the DBI extension.

l. **Intervention & Training:** The University of Glasgow's Institute of Health & Wellbeing (UoG) has produced the DBI training and supporting elements, through a systematic programme of development. This work has supported training of staff and the implementation of DBI across the partnership sites, which includes on-going testing and refinement. Over 1,550 frontline staff have received either the DBI Level 1 e-learning module or trainer-facilitated classroom training across all four partnership pilot sites. A total of 82 current staff across the six DBI Level 2 provider organisations have been trained in DBI Level 2. In addition, the UoG have developed sustainable and supportive systems and materials for the on-going delivery and monitoring of the training, supported by the DBI Central Team. In addition, the UoG have led the engagement process and reviewed the literature in support of the adaptation of DBI for the extension to 16-17 year olds. The UoG have also adapted both the Level 1 and Level 2 DBI training and tools to include specific COVID 19 components to complement the existing resources. To date: Over 80 NHS 24 Mental Health Hub staff and managers have participated in the DBI Level 1 training, including three trained trainers building future sustainability. Additionally, 74 third sector DBI Level 2 practitioners have participated in the additional COVID 19 training components, with further training planned.

m. **Collaborative Infrastructure:** The collaborative infrastructure, tools and systems have been established, in support of the effective delivery of DBI, respecting information governance requirements.

n. **Communication:** A website has been established to provide ease of access to information, www.dbi.scot. With the ever growing interest and reach of DBI, the main focus of communication activity during the period from April to September 2020 centred around improvements to the performance of the DBI website, improving search engine rankings and load times across multiple devices and platforms, as well as ensuring that the site met the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, which fully came into force on the 23rd of September 2020. Traffic to the website continues to grow exponentially. During the period from April 2020 to September 2020, the site received 11,842 visits, against 5816 visits during the period of the preceding report (October 2019 - through to March 2020.) Not only did the number of visitors increase, but the time spent on the site and the number of pages accessed per visit, also increased. The latest news section is updated regularly as is home page to reflects the national COVID 19 guidance with links to related national programmes.



o. **Reflective Practice:** Dr Rachel Fraser, Psychologist and DBI Borders Clinical Lead, has been giving dedicated time to the DBI Central Team in support of working with all DBI providers to share best practice in relation to providing support, supervision and reflective practice, who together have produced a supportive frame-work. In addition, a number of new learning briefs have been produced for the DBI providers in responses to the recognition that issues around

[6] https://www.dbi.scot/general/interim-evaluation-shows-dbi-helping-people-in-distress/

alcohol misuse, domestic violence, bereavement and self-harm and risk are more present in DBI since the COVID 19 pandemic.

p. **Key Landmarks:** All of this infrastructure, legacy and sustainable development exist to support and embed the implementation of DBI at a local level. Through strong governance structures, effective programme management, a commitment to improve the response to distress in Scotland, underpinned by collaboration and hard work, the DBI programme has achieved its objectives set out for phase 1, planning (November 2016 to May 2017), phase 2, Implementation: Controlled Testing (June 2017 to September 2017), phase 3, Controlled Implementation (October 2017 to March 2018) and phase 4, Full Scale Implementation, up-scaling across all four pilot site regions and referring to six locally commissioned DBI Level 2 third sector providers (Penumbra, Lifelink, Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health, The Richmond Fellowship Scotland, Scottish Association for Mental Health and Support in Mind Scotland) since March 2018. In addition, the programme has met all key landmarks in support of the extension of DBI as above, with the programme receiving referrals for 16-17 year olds since May 2019 and although there was a slight delay due to the pandemic the testing of DBI for those aged 14-15 years of age will commence in January 2021. The first associate site was established in Moray (lead by Penumbra) in June 2019 with nine more H&SCPs preparing to go live in the new year and six other sites in planning. Since the 8th June 2020, anyone who phones the NHS24 Mental Health Hub in emotional distress from anywhere in Scotland *and* who does not need emergency clinical intervention *and* is assessed as appropriate for referral to DBI, can now be referred to the DBI Programme for further support.

q. **Outcomes & Experiences So Far:** An independent evaluation is commissioned and due to report by March 2021, see section 'k'. The interim report, which is already published is very encouraging, whilst also offering valuable insights for reflection and continuous improvement, in the spirit of the 'realist' methodology underpinning the evaluation. The following observations drawn from engagement and routine performance data are shared below:

Training: The training programmes are helping to build workforce skills, knowledge and confidence. The staff delivering both Level 1 and Level 2 DBI report improvements in collaborative working and an improved culture of compassion. Staff also report improved staff experience through being able to meet the needs of people in distress through the option of being able to refer people to DBI.

Outcomes: There were a total of 11,826 referrals to the DBI Level 2 service across the four pilot sites, the Moray Associate site and the NHS 24 extension up to the 1st December 2020, and this includes 5,108 referrals received between 1st March and 1st December, during the COVID-19 period. These numbers include a total of 1,321 referrals which have been received via the Mental Health Hub at NHS24. The continuous incremental and considered implementation of DBI has seen the number of the referrals per month rise to around 679, from 381 over the same six-month period last year and 185 the year before. The early observations show a high level of engagement in the DBI programme by those referred, with average levels of distress reducing. Those who had presented in distress previously and prior to DBI also subjectively reported a much improved experience through DBI.

r. **Case Studies:** Case studies are gathered as a powerful means of sharing the real life experience of providing and receiving DBI support. The independent evaluation has highlighted that front-line service providers really value seeing the difference that their immediate support and onward referral makes to those with whom they have contact. In addition, our collaborators at See Me have encouraged a greater focus on learning from the lived experience. The 6 case examples were shared by staff involved in supporting people who have reached out for support during the COVID 19 pandemic. Five of the case studies are from people who contacted NHS24 for support in distress and one from a GP, who in turn were referred to DBI. These case studies along side an early collection case studies can be access via: https://www.dbi.scot/resources/case-studies/

s. **Reflection & Development:** The DBI community has demonstrated incredible commitment, innovation, flexibility, creativity and adaptability in how it has responded to the pandemic, with all involved mobilising their collective assets, not only maintaining the provision of connected compassionate support during these challenging times but expanding its reach at significant pace and scale, whilst taking forward the associate and children and young person's elements. The contribution of all involved is acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

t. **Moving Forward:** The programme now continues controlled and incremental implementation. In addition, the testing of DBI for those aged under 16 years will commence, alongside the scaling up of the associate programme across other regions of Scotland. The national COVID 19 response will ensure national access to DBI via NHS24. The final independent evaluations of both the core and COVID 19 (NHS24) programmes will greatly inform the continuous improvement of DBI and support the transition plans through to March 2024.

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