Who are we?
The Sunderland Early Intervention in Psychosis Service, is based on
government initiatives to ensure “that young people with a first episode of
psychosis will get the help they need” (National Plan for the NHS). This new
service is part of the Mental Health Trust and closely linked to existing
mental health services.

We are a multidisciplinary team consisting of Psychiatry, Clinical Psychology,
Occupational Therapists, and nurses (who take on the role of Care
Co-ordinators).

Who is the service for?
The service is open to anyone aged 14 - 35 years, who appear to be
experiencing a first onset of major psychotic symptoms for example: hearing
voices, experiencing visual hallucinations or delusional ideas.

Evidence suggests that a comprehensive, specialist Early Intervention
Service can be very effective in helping people who are currently
experiencing their first episode of psychosis.

However, we also want to make sure that people who are in the early stages
of developing psychosis have their illness detected very quickly. People can
be ill for up to two years before they seek help, which means that they are
less likely to make good progress, even when treatment does begin.

Therefore, we are happy to assess someone if their diagnosis is unclear, but
if they are showing clear signs of psychotic symptoms. Some research
suggests that people at very high risk of developing schizophrenia, can be
prevented from doing so by intervening at a pre-psychotic or prodromal
stage, but of course many young people may exhibit signs that could be
perceived as pre-psychotic. These include: behaviour changes,
suspiciousness, odd ideas, apparently physical complaints that can’t be
accounted for, etc, and these could arise for many different reasons, such
as, substance misuse, developmental problems or depression. So it is
important not to label young people, as only a very small proportion will
develop a psychotic illness. For these reasons we will only work with young
people who have clear psychotic symptoms.

If you are concerned about a young person who is exhibiting some of the
symptoms listed above or if you feel that they may be in a pre-psychotic
stage, we recommend that you attempt to monitor their mental health and
refer very quickly if you do detect psychotic symptoms. You are also
welcome to telephone a member of the team for advice, or to discuss your concerns.

**What does the service offer?**
The service is based on the principles of psychosocial interventions, which means that we work with people and their families, in all areas of their daily lives. We believe that people can recover from psychosis and a core part of our team's work is to try to facilitate recovery.

The aims of the Sunderland EIP service are to:

- Improve the early detection of first episode psychosis and reduce duration of untreated psychosis.
- Improve the clinical outcome and quality of life for young people who have experienced psychosis, through implementation of evidence-based interventions, for example: CBT, family work, use of low dose atypical neuroleptic medication, crisis planning, relapse prevention etc.
- Offer treatment in the least restrictive and stigmatising setting.
- Maintain people within their communities whenever possible.
- Provide a service that works closely with health; youth and voluntary agencies.
- Promote normal social roles and in particular, work and education.
- Promote service user and carer involvement.

**Entry Criteria**

- Ages 14 - 35 (from 14th birthday to 36th).
- First episode psychosis of all causes (i.e. including drug-induced and bipolar psychoses and other affective psychoses).
- A psychosis is defined for our purposes as psychotic symptoms that have lasted a week (i.e. hallucinations and/or delusions etc +/- thought disorders on seven successive days).
- We take all referrals meeting these criteria who have not been treated for psychosis in secondary services (i.e. they may have had several episodes before reaching secondary services).
- We will take all first episode cases from secondary mental health services if they have been in the secondary service for an identified psychosis for less than three months.
- We would like referrals to be initiated as soon as it is reasonably clear that there is a psychosis. Please do not wait until it is clear what kind of psychosis it is.
Who can make a referral?
Referrals (including self-referrals) can be made via telephone at any time through the Initial Response Service (IRS) on 0303 123 1145. Where possible, please provide written information.

The service will work with many other agencies including primary and secondary care, voluntary services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, education and various other organisations that may come into contact with young people. A large part of the work of the team will therefore be to co-ordinate and liaise, as well as educate, to ensure that people suffering from the first onset of psychosis are recognised and referred on appropriately.

What if I have a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint about the service?
If you want to make a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint you can talk to the people directly involved in your care or you can complete a feedback form.
- Feedback forms are available from Trust staff
- Customer Liaison Department  Telephone: 0191 245 6679
- You can complete a feedback form electronically by visiting the Trust Website www.ntw.nhs.uk (click on the ‘Contact Us’ tab)

How can we be contacted?
Initial Response Service (IRS)
Initial Response Service
Hopewood Park
Ryhope
Sunderland
SR2 0NB
Telephone: 0303 123 1145
Fax: 0191 566 7200