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1. The positive impact of the project/innovation on Occupational Therapy practice and/or patient care - supported by qualitative or quantitative evidence or published literature.
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4. The extent the project enhances the occupational therapy role and/or collaboration across the sectors.

A Critical Review of the Impact of Individual Placement Support for Enabling People with Severe and Enduring Mental Illness into Employment

Background: Employment is recognised as a vital health outcome for people with mental illness (MHTF 2016). Over 132,000 people with disabilities are supported into work through specialist employment schemes (DWP 2016). People with severe and enduring mental illness [SMI] have the highest unemployment rate and experience complex barriers and reduced opportunities to access work (Ravello 2014). Independent Placement Support [IPS] combines employment and mental health services to provide an effective approach for supporting people into employment (Centre for Mental Health, 2014). There is a paucity of evidence within the UK around the implementation and impact of IPS as an approach to enable people SMI to access work.

Significance to Practice: The principles of IPS need to be set within a national employment pathway for consistency in supporting individuals with SMI into work. IPS training for employment support workers is key to increasing an understanding of mental health illness, addressing complex barriers and attitudes regarding an individual's work capability. Promoting recovery and optimising an individual's true potential in occupational skill and work capacity needs to be the key focus of intervention (Council for Work and Health 2016). Integrated employment and mental health services are required to improve client centred practice and inter-agency working. Collaborative working would increase employment opportunities and positive outcomes for individuals with SMI (Wilson and Cronin-Davis 2016). Occupational therapists can improve vocational outcomes for individuals by evaluating meaningful occupations that fit the person's work roles, occupational skill and work capabilities to meet task demands (COT 2008). Occupational therapists are well placed in supporting individual's with SMI into mainstream employment. Inclusion of occupational therapists within employment teams is essential for optimising opportunities for work.

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