

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING STRENGTHS WORKING (14/7/04)

Purpose

To provide guidance for encouraging the identification of *strengths* as an essential part of all *assessments* in practice across the local services. Reflecting the need for a **flexible approach** that is individually tailored to service users needs on a case-by-case basis. It is intended to be a 'method of working' that supports client-led practice, not a service driven need for auditing standards. A *strengths assessment* tool may help the process, but is not considered *essential* for ensuring a unique picture of the person is being developed through a unique process. *Strengths working* forms a radically different basis with which to resolve problems and work with risk.

WHO IS IT FOR?

- ? Everyone who comes into contact with all services should have a balanced assessment that includes recognition of their 'strengths and abilities', not *just* a summary of 'problems'.
- ? All service users should have an assessment of their strengths at least in a process of completion, documented in whatever way is most appropriate to ensuring they strongly influence the on-going work of the team.
- ? Wants, aims, and aspirations are important anchors to drive plans forward, to clarify what resources are needed from whom in order to achieve them, and to identify what barriers or difficulties may need to be overcome.

WHEN IS IT USED?

- ? From the first point of referral, direct contact and thinking about a person determined to be in need of the local services.
- ? It is not a specialist assessment only to be drawn on in special cases.

HOW IS IT USED?

- ? There is no single way of doing it, *or documenting it*, but the outcome should be a positive inventory of achievements, resources and aspirations individualised to the experience of the person themselves.
- ? In many cases a *tool* may simply act as the prompt for this aspect of assessment to take place, and to influence decisions in plans.