Potential Benefits

- Costs associated with the unemployment of individuals with psychotic illnesses in Australia, USA and Europe account for over 50% of all costs associated with psychotic illnesses.
- Employment has been shown to significantly reduce reliance on welfare benefits.
- Successful employment is potentially associated with better management of symptoms, reduced hospitalization, and reduced substance use.
- Employment provides a socially valued role that has benefits in terms of identity and self-esteem.
- Employment provides a pathway to greater social and economic functioning. This directly addresses the social isolation experienced by many young people with psychosis.

Key Principles

- All young people have the right to education, training and employment.
- All young people have the right to develop a career that gives meaning to their lives and makes use of their talents.
- Young people with psychosis should have the same educational and vocational opportunities as their non-psychotic peers.
- No individual should be discriminated against or disadvantaged in relation to their educational and vocational aspirations because they have had a serious mental health difficulty.
- Educational as well as vocational outcomes should be equally valued and supported in first-episode psychosis.

Further information

This statement is a product of an international meeting looking at the benefits of supported employment and education in FEP which took place in London on 30th June 2008 involving clinicians, researchers, economists, and policy makers from the UK, USA, Canada and Australia.

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A copy of this international consensus statement can be downloaded from http://www.iris-initiative.org.uk/

This leaflet was printed by the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) working in partnership with the international First Episode Vocational Recovery (iFEVR) group.
Our Goals:

- Seek support from education, training, employment and benefits agencies to assist young people with psychosis to complete their education and employment.
- Support young people to achieve their education, training and employment aspirations.
- Enhance that functional outcomes, such as education, training and employment are as equally important in recovery as outcomes in symptom domains.
- Advocate with funding agencies to appropriately fund evidence based interventions that address functional outcomes in relation to education, training and employment.
- Encourage young people to participate in government benefits ‘poverty trap’.
- Not working has non-financial costs in terms of loss of social capital, exacerbation of stressors, lack of a socially valued role.
- Lack of a job is a barrier to other forms of social inclusion.

Processes to enable this:

- Active confrontation of myths that people with mental illness typically do not want to and cannot work.
- Equal priority given to educational and work functioning as to symptom levels.
- Access to evidence based vocational interventions for young people such as the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, for both employment and educational goals.
- An active and flexible research programme to ensure the best evidence is available to support vocational interventions for young people with psychosis.
- Access to specialist educational and vocational support to enable education and work goals that are sustained.
- Incentives for employment agencies to provide early and sustained support for employment goals.

We aim to:

- Combat stigma, discrimination and prejudice in education, training and work settings by raising awareness about psychosis and the crucial importance of educational and vocational outcomes for longer term mental health.
- Identify key principles and processes that contribute to achieving and sustaining employment goals.
- Greater understanding of the processes that contribute to achieving and sustaining employment.
- Greater understanding of ethnico-cultural factors that have an impact on individuals’ access to work, including lack of language competency, and dislocation in refugees and asylum seekers.
- Employment interventions focusing on retaining and sustaining employment in addition to gaining employment.
- More flexibility in employment and benefit systems to be sensitive and responsive to the episodic nature of psychosis for some young people.
- Long term protection of housing and healthcare costs when coming off benefits to return to or start work.
- Protection of individual rights to choose not to disclose the nature of a mental health difficulty to employers.

Introduction...

The Early Psychosis Declaration (2005) set out 5 key objectives for action to provide much needed support for young people who develop psychosis, including raising community awareness about psychosis and the promotion of recovery and ordinary lives.

This International Consensus Statement sets clear goals for what we would like to achieve in relation to employment and educational outcomes for young people with psychosis. We highlight current challenges and potential benefits of supporting young people with psychosis to complete their education and gain employment. We highlight current challenges and potential benefits of supporting young people with psychosis to complete their education and gain employment.

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- Combat factors that contribute to social exclusion and unfilled lives.
- Encourage professional attitudes that engender hope and optimism that young people with psychosis can achieve meaningful lives.

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Greater understanding of the processes that contribute to achieving and sustaining employment goals.

Greater understanding of ethnico-cultural factors that have an impact on individuals’ access to work, including lack of language competency, and dislocation in refugees and asylum seekers.

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More flexibility in employment and benefit systems to be sensitive and responsive to the episodic nature of psychosis for some young people.

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Protection of individual rights to choose not to disclose the nature of a mental health difficulty to employers.

References: