The stepped care model

The recommendations in this guideline are presented within a stepped care framework that aims to match the needs of people with depression to the most appropriate services, depending on the characteristics of their illness and their personal and social circumstances. Each step represents increased complexity of intervention, with higher steps assuming interventions in previous steps.

Step 1: Recognition in primary care and general hospital settings

Step 2: Treatment of mild depression in primary care

Step 3: Treatment of moderate to severe depression in primary care

Step 4: Treatment of depression by mental health specialists

Step 5: Inpatient treatment for depression

	Who is responsible for care?	What is the focus?	What do they do?
Step 5:	Inpatient care, crisis teams	Risk to life, severe self-neglect	Medication, combined treatments, ECT
Step 4:	Mental health specialists, including crisis teams	Treatment-resistant, recurrent, atypical and psychotic depression, and those at significant risk	Medication, complex psychological interventions, combined treatments
Step 3:	Primary care team, primary care mental health worker	Moderate or severe depression	Medication, psychological interventions, social support
Step 2:	Primary care team, primary care mental health worker	Mild depression	Watchful waiting, guided self-help, computerised CBT, exercise, brief psychological interventions
Step 1:	GP, practice nurse	Recognition	Assessment