

Update

Staffing

Geraldine Mason left the MHRN in September - we thank her for her work with the network. We hope to appoint a Carer and Public Coordinator early 2012. The remaining Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) team continues to support and coordinate involvement work across the network.

The team:

- Professor George Szmukler – MHRN Associate Director for User and Carer Involvement;
- Joanne Ashcroft – MHRN PPI Manager;
- Dr Thomas Kabir – Service Users in Research Coordinator;
- Lorrain McPherson – PPI Administrator.

Taking PPI forward from 2012

We are pleased to inform readers that the Department of Health has confirmed funding for PPI in the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) networks (of which the MHRN is one) until March 2015 following submission of a successful business case. Part of the business case outlined the need for the networks to collaborate more. MHRN has been working on a draft plan of work for 2012/13 and is presenting this to the other networks and to lay members in November.

Good Practice Guidance for involving carers in mental health research

Julie Repper (University of Nottingham) with the help of Gill Grimshaw (University of Warwick) and Alan Simpson (City University, London) has written the MHRN good practice guidance on involving carers in mental health research. The writers consulted with Newham Mental Health Carers Group, East London NHS Foundation Trust, SUGAR (Service User and Carer Group Advising on Research), City University, the MHRN carer reference groups and FACTOR advisory board in the production of the guidance. The guidance is currently being formatted for publication and will be available soon via our website (www.mhrn.info) and in hard copy. If you would like to order, in advance, a copy, please contact our administrator (details at bottom of update) and we will send you one when available.

Carer Reference Groups

Our two carer reference groups based in London and the Midlands continue to flourish. The groups are held monthly in London and Coventry; carers meet with researchers to discuss early proposals, ongoing research and ideas for future research. We are currently arranging for the groups to receive feedback from researchers who have used the service in the last 12 months. We will publish this on our website. The groups have convenors: Dr Matthew Broome (Midlands) and Dr Stefania Bonaccorso (London) and in the absence of a central coordinator are currently being supported by Carly Cooper (Heart of England hub manager) and Professor George Szmukler (MHRN associate director).

On 25th October 2011 Radio 4's 'All in the Mind' programme featured our London carer reference group. The group discussed their input into mental health research. If you would like to hear this programme we have a link from the main page of our website (www.mhrn.info).

Our website

Our new website is now up and running (www.mhrn.info) but like all new products it will benefit from a few small tweaks. In you have anything to feedback about the site please contact our administrator, details below.

There are several items of interest on the website we would like to highlight to you.

- Our payments policy – from the home page (www.mhrn.info) select the family members, carers or friends tab. On the right hand side of this page select getting paid for your work then on the next page you will find two payments related documents.
- On our publications page (click the tab at the bottom of our home page) you will find a range of news stories, information leaflets and reports. For example, you will find a report on work done to find out what outcome measures are valued (outcome measurement in mental health).
- At the bottom of the publications page you will find 5 case studies outlining good examples of involvement in research.

A couple of highlights from 2010/11

As early intervention services reach their 10th anniversary the work of National Eden goes on with new NIHR programme funding

Early intervention in psychosis clinical research group (CRG) led by Professor Max Birchwood (University of Birmingham) was the first MHRN CRG. The group drew inspiration from a programme of research into first episode psychosis teams that had been initiated in the Midlands (EDEN). National EDEN was the first large study (DH funded 2006-10) for the group. National Eden was a longitudinal cohort study of people with a first episode of psychosis who were receiving care from Early Intervention Services (EIS) in five sites across England. As the study progressed, with the help of the MHRN, four other services were included to increase the diversity of the study sites and the potential recruitment pool. Sites were purposively chosen to reflect the different challenges of implementing EIS in varying geographical and socio-demographic settings. **1027 people were recruited, making it one of the largest representative cohorts of first episode psychosis patients ever recruited.** The study ended in late 2010, but has been succeeded by an NIHR Programme Grant which aims to extend the length of the cohort's follow up period to three years, plus conduct a trial of a new therapy for people with persistently poor social functioning.

TRACK study is published

TRACK is the first- ever study in international literature on transition of care from CAMHS to adult mental health services. The team followed a representative

cohort of young people in six trusts in England as they made this transition. Many young people fell through the care gap between services; and those that made transition experienced poor care. MHRN helped recruit patients into this complex study at all six sites and contributed greatly to its successful completion. **TRACK has led to major focus on transitional care, which is now prominent in the UK government's mental health strategy** (*No Health Without Mental Health* and the earlier *New Horizons*). The Royal College has published a briefing document on improving transition and set up an expert reference group. The National Mental Health Development Unit has produced recommendations for commissioners and providers on improving transitional care. The West Midlands SHA has funded the BRIDGE study to compare models of transitional care. The TRACK study is being replicated in the Republic of Ireland.

Other news of interest

The MHRN works with a press officer dedicated to mental health at the Science Media Centre (SMC). Claire Bithell came into post as press officer in May 2010 and in her first year there were 13 press briefings and 19 expert reactions to new research. More recently Newsnight's features on mental health research (7th & 8th November 2011) were sparked by press briefings from the SMC that ran over the summer months and flagged up the burden of mental illness and the importance of research. To watch the film by Susan Watts visit:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/9631964.stm>

Contact details

Joanne Ashcroft (PPI Manager): joanne.ashcroft@manchester.ac.uk

Lorraine McPherson (PPI Administrator): mhrnppi@kcl.ac.uk

Telephone: 020 7848 0644