

# Are you running a research project about mental health and looking for participants?

# Or are you planning to set up a trial or study that needs to recruit participants through NHS services?

**The Mental Health Research Network** is part of the National Institute for Health Research. Our mission is to help make research studies happen in the NHS in England, and to do this, we support research teams in a number of very practical ways.

Firstly, we know about other studies that are already recruiting participants via NHS services and can therefore advise about sites where your project is most likely to succeed. We have an overview of mental health research being undertaken throughout the country and can give you confidential advice on the suitability and feasibility of running your project within the NHS.

Secondly, we work with about 60 NHS trusts in England that run community-based and specialist mental health services in cities and rural areas. We can help you find collaborators and investigators who work in these services, and handle the bureaucracy necessary to get them on board. Our regional offices (called 'hubs') will help get NHS local approvals and complete all the necessary paperwork to make it easy for you to set up your trial or study at as many sites as your project demands, and help you secure the resources you need to make your project run smoothly.

Thirdly, we can put you in touch with people who have experience of mental health problems and their relatives who are willing to get involved in studies as advisors or researchers, helping to make your research question and recruitment practice more relevant and realistic.

Fourthly, we employ teams of clinical studies officers who help recruit participants to projects that we support. They can work alongside your research team, and are often based within the mental health trusts where they recruit.

**The earlier you get in touch, the more we can offer, at no extra cost.**





### Graham Thornicroft, professor of community psychiatry...

at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, is chief investigator on the annual Viewpoint survey that asks 1,000 people with mental health problems about their experience of unfair treatment and discrimination. Their answers will help the research team measure whether the across-England anti-stigma campaign *Time to Change* is having an effect on people's daily lives. 'The Mental Health Research Network continues

to be an invaluable resource for the Viewpoint survey in its aim to interview up to 1,000 service users a year,' he says. 'The knowledge and enthusiasm of the clinical studies officers have been a vital link between the research team and the NHS trusts that participate in the survey – liaising with the care teams, raising awareness and being on hand to answer queries that arise. Additionally, the MHRN has been an excellent network to promote the survey to new NHS trusts every year.'

### **We offer support tailored to the needs of your study**

The Mental Health Research Network (MHRN) employs dedicated teams of staff based at eight regional offices throughout England who work exclusively on supporting research studies. They maintain close contact with mental health trusts and universities based within their geographical boundaries. Each of these offices (called 'hubs') is run by a small team of seasoned researchers and mental health professionals who have extensive networks of contacts within mental health, social care and primary care services. They can advise about the practicalities of setting up your research locally and introduce their contacts.

Our clinical studies officers come from a variety of backgrounds: some are mental health professionals, including mental health nurses, social workers and occupational therapists, for example. Others are psychology graduates or have previously worked in research. Their job is to identify and recruit eligible participants to MHRN-supported studies, and they are trained to carry out assessments. They can help ease the administrative burden by, for example, negotiating with NHS trusts on behalf of a study team.

e-science officers based at each of our hubs offer research teams specialist IT support

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and advice. They have invaluable insight into the machinations of local NHS and academic information systems and can help study teams overcome potential difficulties. e-science officers can advise on information governance and electronic data capture – and design websites for your study.

Our hubs and coordinating centre staff can help publicise your study and its results. We commission plain English summaries of studies we support that are written by people with experience of mental health problems. The summaries are posted on our website and can be used by study teams.

We can also help researchers involved in MHRN-supported projects access courses run by the National Institute for Health Research, the Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre or other relevant organisations.

### **Access to people who are experts by experience**

One of the conditions of MHRN support is that study teams involve people who have experience of mental health problems in the development of their research project.

The MHRN has set up two expert organisations to ensure research teams have access to people with mental health problems and their family members who are willing to share their first-hand knowledge and expertise in a number of different ways.



### Pooria Sarrami Foroushani, trial coordinator...

of the cCBT study, which is testing workplace-based computerised cognitive behaviour therapy for anxiety and depression, says: 'Our study involves telephone support for the participants who use computerised psychological treatments. This is an important part of the study, and the Mental

Health Research Network has provided us with dedicated interviewers who have been able to cover the jobs very well. One of the great points about the support is the flexibility that is offered to meet the ups and downs in the recruitment rate. The MHRN has also assisted our study with an efficient and user-friendly database, which is used by interviewers and the research team.'

Service Users in Research and FACTOR (Families/Friends Together in Research) are both based at our coordinating centre at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, and can advise research teams on the best and most productive way of involving people with experience of mental health problems and care-givers.

Each of our hubs works with local service user groups who have a say in the running of that part of the Network, and can also advise researchers about individual projects. You can contact your local hub to discuss how to involve people who are experts by experience before formally applying for MHRN support.

Service Users in Research has developed good practice guidelines and policies about involving people with experience of mental health problems in all stages of a research study. These guidelines are available on the MHRN website ([www.mhrn.info](http://www.mhrn.info)).

### What kinds of studies does the MHRN support?

We support randomised controlled trials, service evaluations, qualitative studies, epidemiological research, genetic research and e-science studies. We support multi-centre and multi-site projects as well as small single-site pilot studies.

**We can advise researchers on the best and most productive way of involving people with experience of mental health problems and their families.**

We support studies that are based within mental health services, within social care services and within primary care services.

All the studies we support must be included in the National Institute for Health Research Clinical Research Network Portfolio Database. This is a searchable database of research, which lists studies and trials being carried out within NHS organisations in the UK. Being on the Portfolio Database means your project is eligible for 'service support' to help it run within the NHS. This support is provided via Comprehensive Local Research Networks, which are also part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

The majority of high-quality, peer-reviewed studies that are funded by the NIHR, other government departments, or non-commercial partner organisations with similar competitive commissioning criteria, are automatically eligible to be included in the Portfolio Database.

However, if your study is not automatically eligible, we can help you apply for inclusion. If you are unsure about the eligibility of your project, contact your local hub or the MHRN coordinating centre.





## Tony Morrison, professor of clinical psychology...

at Manchester University, runs several studies that have the support of the Mental Health Research Network. 'The Mental Health Research Network North West Hub provides all sorts of valuable support that makes conducting research less problematic,' he says. 'Recruitment is one of the

biggest headaches of research. Participants have to be recruited through care coordinators or services, and it's not always easy to get your foot in the door and talk to busy teams of mental health professionals about getting involved in a trial. Clinical studies officers employed by the hub do a lot of work on recruitment and that frees up research staff to spend more time on the project.'

## How to get MHRN support for your study

You need to fill in an application form available on our website, from our coordinating centre, or from your local hub. It may benefit your study to discuss your plans with your local hub team or the coordinating centre before submitting an application.

Your application will be considered by the MHRN's Adoption, Allocation and Advisory Committee that meets every six weeks throughout the year. The dates and more detailed information about the application process are posted on our website at [www.mhrn.info](http://www.mhrn.info). All applications are considered in confidence. The committee uses three criteria to reach a decision about whether to offer support.

- Is there evidence of service user input in the development of the proposal?
- Is the proposal in line with national mental health policy?
- Is it free of major ethical or design flaws?

The committee will also consider whether the hubs are able to offer the support your study needs.

If you have applied to the NIHR Coordinated System for gaining NHS Permission (NIHR CSP), you will automatically receive an invitation to apply for the support of the MHRN.

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## What we expect in return for MHRN support

You must provide and update information about your study for the NIHR Clinical Research Network Portfolio Database. This includes a summary of your project, information about the study design, the organisation that is funding the research, and contact details.

You must also supply information about the numbers of people recruited, usually once a month. Study coordinators can log in to update these details from any computer with internet access.

We also expect you to acknowledge MHRN support on any material you produce about your study, including information for participants, websites and papers published in academic journals.

And finally ... we want you to tell us about the results of your research at the end of your study. We think it is best practice to notify mental health professionals working in services that have supported your research about your findings, and encourage research teams to also tell participants about results. We may also be able to help disseminate your results to a wider audience.



**Sarah Goldberg,  
research associate...**

at Nottingham University, is working on the TEAM (Trial of a Medical and Mental Health Unit for Older People) project. 'Our study is an evaluation of a medical and mental health unit (MMHU) for older people admitted as an emergency to hospital,' she says. 'For the study, we recruit patients and their carers, collect baseline information and do a follow-up for outcomes at three months. We recruit patients allocated by the Acute Medical Unit

to the MMHU or standard care (any other ward in the hospital). Without the Mental Health Research Network, we would not have been able to recruit everyone allocated to the MMHU as we did not have the resources available. Patients would have been sub-sampled. This would have weakened the credibility of the study. With the help of the Mental Health Research Network, we are able to recruit everyone who is willing to take part in the study who has been allocated to MMHU or standard care.'

**If you want to recruit participants across the UK to your study**

The MHRN has close working links with partner networks Mental Health Research Network Cymru and the Scottish Mental Health Research Network.

We can liaise with them to help you find potential collaborators and investigators working within services relevant to your research across the UK.

**More about the Mental Health Research Network**

The Mental Health Research Network is one of a number of clinical research networks that are part of the National Institute for Health Research and exist to help research teams run studies and trials within the NHS.

Another five networks offer support to research projects that focus on other health specialisms. They are cancer; stroke; diabetes; medicines for children; dementias and neurodegenerative diseases.

A Primary Care Research Network supports projects about the clinical management of long-term conditions, health promotion, disease prevention,

**Our e-science officers offer research teams specialist IT support. They can advise on information governance and electronic data capture – and design websites for your study.**

screening and early diagnosis. Comprehensive Local Research Networks support trials and studies about all other diseases, illnesses and health problems.

Researchers might be able to get support from more than one network.

The work of all these networks is coordinated through the National Institute for Health Research Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre. You can find out about every study supported by all the networks through the publicly-accessible NIHR Clinical Research Network Portfolio Database (<http://public.ukcrn.org.uk/search>).

The Mental Health Research Network is managed jointly by the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London and the University of Manchester. Staff who work in the MHRN's coordinating centre are based at the Institute of Psychiatry in south London and in Preston.





**Sylvia Cooper,  
study coordinator...**

for the CHAMP trial (at Imperial College London), investigating the success of cognitive behaviour therapy for health anxiety, says: 'The Mental Health Research Network has been fundamental to the success of the CHAMP study. The clinical studies officers in both East Midlands and North London have supported our work in a number of ways. We have been recruiting patients from gastroenterology, cardiology,

respiratory medicine, endocrinology and neurology outpatient clinics in five hospitals. This demanded a huge staff input and clinical studies officers provided vital support by either covering clinics we couldn't staff or by helping out at very busy clinics alongside the research assistants. They also assisted with the follow-up interviews at some centres. Without clinical studies officers, the study would not have achieved the successful recruitment and high follow-up rates we currently have.'

**To find out more about how the MHRN can help you...**

**Contact your local hub**

**North East**

Hub manager: Saffra Knox  
email: saffra.knox@durham.ac.uk  
telephone: 0191 256 3290

**North West**

Hub manager: Moira Winters  
email: moira.winters@lancashirecare.nhs.uk  
telephone: 01772 773 515

**Heart of England**

Hub manager: Carly Cooper  
email: carly.cooper@bsmhft.nhs.uk  
or heartofenglandhub@bsmhft.nhs.uk  
telephone: 0121 678 4326

**East Midlands plus South Yorkshire**

Hub manager: Ann Priddey  
email: ann.priddey@nottingham.ac.uk  
telephone: 0115 823 1302

**East Anglia**

Hub manager: Angela Browne  
email: angela.browne@cpft.nhs.uk  
telephone: 01223 746 135

**North London**

Hub manager: Sandra O'Sullivan  
email: s.osullivan@imperial.ac.uk  
telephone: 020 7386 1237

**South London and South East**

Hub manager: Liz Hutt  
Assistant hub manager: Sheri Oduola  
email: slsehub@kcl.ac.uk  
telephone: 020 7848 5015

**West**

Hub manager: Chantal Sunter  
email: westhub-mhrn@bristol.ac.uk  
telephone: 0117 331 0936

**Contact the MHRN coordinating centre (including Service Users in Research and FACTOR (Families/Friends Together in Research))**

based at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London  
email: mhrn@kcl.ac.uk  
telephone: 020 7848 0699

**Or visit our website**

[www.mhrn.info](http://www.mhrn.info)

**We have an overview of mental health research being undertaken throughout the country and can give you confidential advice on the suitability and feasibility of running your project in the NHS.**



**These NHS trusts run mental health services and take part in studies and trials supported by the MHRN**

**Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust** (*West Hub*)

**Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**NHS Barnsley** (*East Midlands Hub plus South Yorkshire*)

**Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

**Bradford District Care Trust** (*North East Hub*)

**Calderstones Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*North West Hub*)

**Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust** (*East Anglia Hub*)

**Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** (child psychiatry services in Royal Manchester Children's Hospital) (*North West Hub*)

**Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*North West Hub*)

**Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*West Hub*)

**Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

**Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*North West Hub*)

**Derbyshire Mental Health Services NHS Trust** (*East Midlands Hub plus South Yorkshire*)

**Devon Partnership NHS Trust** (*West Hub*)

**Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

**East London NHS Foundation Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*North West Hub*)

**Greater Manchester West Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust** (*North West Hub*)

**Hampshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*West Hub*)

**Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**Humber NHS Foundation Trust** (*North East Hub*)

**Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust** (*South London and South East Hub*)

**Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust** (*North West Hub*)

**Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust** (*North East Hub*)

**Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

**Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*East Midlands Hub plus South Yorkshire*)

**Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust** (*North West Hub*)

**Mersey Care NHS Trust** (*North West Hub*)

**Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust** (*East Anglia Hub*)

**North East Lincolnshire Care Plus Trust** (*East Midlands Hub plus South Yorkshire*)

**North East London NHS Foundation Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**North Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

**North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust** (*North East Hub*)

**Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

**Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust** (*North East Hub*)

**Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust** (*East Midlands Hub plus South Yorkshire*)

**Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust** (*South London and South East Hub*)

**Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust** (*North West Hub*)

**Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust** (*East Midlands Hub plus South Yorkshire*)

**Sandwell Mental Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

**Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust** (*East Midlands Hub plus South Yorkshire*)

**South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust** (*East Anglia Hub and North London Hub*)

**South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust** (*South London and South East Hub*)

**South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

**South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust** (*South London and South East Hub*)

**South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*North East Hub*)

**Suffolk Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust** (*East Anglia Hub*)

**Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*South London and South East Hub*)

**Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** (*South London and South East Hub*)

**2gether NHS Foundation Trust** (*West Hub*)

**Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust** (*North East Hub*)

**The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**West London Mental Health NHS Trust** (*North London Hub*)

**Wolverhampton City NHS Primary Care Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

**Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust** (*Heart of England Hub*)

## Useful links and resources

**National Institute for Health Research**  
[www.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.nihr.ac.uk)

**Clinical Research Network  
Coordinating Centre**  
[www.crncc.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.crncc.nihr.ac.uk)

**NIHR Clinical Research Network Portfolio  
Database**  
<http://public.ukcrn.org.uk/search>

**NIHR RD Direct**  
[www.rddirect.org.uk](http://www.rddirect.org.uk)  
A national advice service for researchers  
working in health and social care.

**NIHR RD Info**  
[www.rdinfo.org.uk](http://www.rdinfo.org.uk)  
Advice on research, training and funding,  
including links to regional Research Design  
Services that offer support to researchers in  
England who plan to apply for NIHR funding.

**NIHR RD Learning**  
[www.rdlearning.org.uk](http://www.rdlearning.org.uk)  
Health-related research courses and training.

**NIHR RD Funding**  
[www.rdfunding.org.uk](http://www.rdfunding.org.uk)  
Information about funding streams  
for research projects.

**NHS R&D Forum**  
[www.rdforum.nhs.uk](http://www.rdforum.nhs.uk)  
A learning and support organisation  
for people involved in planning and  
managing research in the NHS.

**Clinical Trials Toolkit**  
[www.ct-toolkit.ac.uk](http://www.ct-toolkit.ac.uk)  
A site developed by the Medical Research  
Council and Department of Health for  
use in all publicly-funded academic trials.

**Data and Tissues Toolkit**  
[www.dt-toolkit.ac.uk](http://www.dt-toolkit.ac.uk)  
This site, developed by the Medical Research  
Council and other collaborators, offers  
practical help with the legislative and good  
practice requirements relating to the use  
of personal information and human tissue  
samples in healthcare research in the UK.

**Mental Health Research Network**  
[www.mhrn.info](http://www.mhrn.info)

**MHRN Portfolio Helpline**  
email:  
[portfoliosupport.mhrn@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:portfoliosupport.mhrn@manchester.ac.uk)  
phone: 01772 773 507

This service is for researchers who need  
to register or update information about  
studies onto the NIHR Clinical Research  
Network Portfolio Database and are  
encountering problems.

**The MRC/MHRN Cohort Dataset  
Directory for mental health researchers**  
[www.mrc-mhrn-cohort.info](http://www.mrc-mhrn-cohort.info)  
This directory enables you to find  
cohort studies that may be relevant  
to your research and provides you with  
information about each study's principal  
investigators; funding and current status;  
study design, sampling and continuity  
plans; types of data collected, index of  
study measures and relevance to mental  
health; policy on data access and sharing;  
website or contact details.

**UKCRC Registered Clinical Trials Units**  
[www.ukcrc-ctu.org.uk](http://www.ukcrc-ctu.org.uk)  
This site is a resource for clinical  
researchers and funders who want  
to identify Clinical Trials Units (CTUs)  
that have expertise in centrally  
coordinating multicentre clinical  
trials, as well as in trial design, data  
management and analysis. All the  
CTUs listed have achieved UKCRC  
registration status. The site has been  
developed by the NIHR Clinical Research  
Network Coordinating Centre on behalf  
of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration.

