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**Ways to Wellness Evaluation**

**Newsletter No 3, 27th June 2019**

**Welcome to Jayne Jeffries, Research Associate**



My name is Jayne Jeffries and I recently joined the research team at Newcastle University. I have lots of research experience working with service users and voluntary organisations on issues related to health in the north east.

Over the next ten months I will be researching the role of Link Workers in the Ways to Wellness intervention. This is a much neglected area of research despite being crucial to the delivery of social prescribing. To do this, I will be using **two research methods.**

**Focus groups**: You will have the opportunity to reflect on your role as Link Workers delivering the Ways to Wellness intervention.

Focus groups will be conducted at a convenient time during normal working hours. It is likely that there will be three focus groups at First Contact Clinical and three at Mental Health Concern, with up to 8 people per group.

* We aim to conduct focus groups at the start (August 2019), middle (December 2019) and end (April 2020) of the research.
* The provider organisations will be reimbursed for your participation

**Shadowing:** involvesobserving Link Workers in their daily routine over a number of mutually agreed days. This will enable the Link Worker role in its entirety to be examined. In practice, this will feel very similar to the shadowing that new Link Workers do before they start.

I will be seeking volunteer Link Workers to ‘shadow’. I will ask you to reflect on your day, when we have time, including between meetings/phone calls with service users. Where appropriate, I will request permission, to attend meetings with Ways to Wellness service users, institutional meetings or training sessions.

Shadowing will start in autumn 2019, when practical issues and permissions have been agreed with Mark (First Contact Clinical) and Louise (Mental Health Concern). I am really looking forwardto meeting you all over the next few monthswhen I’ll be dropping into monthly meetings and setting up the focus groups.

If you would like to know more about the me, the methods I will be using, or have any questions or feedback please email [jayne.jeffries@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:jayne.jeffries@ncl.ac.uk)

**Thank you for collecting a year’s worth of EQ5D questionnaire data**

The research team would like to express huge thanks to all the Link Workers for collecting baseline EQ5D data between 1st July 2018 and 30th June 2019. As of May 2019, we have 607 completed questionnaires.

**So what happens now?**

The research team will be following up the clients who completed a baseline assessment for the period 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2020. We have discussed the procedures with Louise and Helen at Mental Health Concern and with Mark at First Contact Clinical. Once we have checked there are no reasons not to send out a follow up questionnaire and that the contact details haven’t changed, we will mail clients a questionnaire, asking them to complete it and return in a stamped addressed envelope. If we haven’t heard from them after 10 days, we will remind them by phone, and if necessary offer to complete it with them over the phone at that time. If you receive any queries from your clients about this, please reassure them that the study is being undertaken by a group of Newcastle University researchers that you know, and that they can ring Allison Lawson 0191 2821348/2084583 if they have any issues.

**What about the research findings?**

We will be analysing the baseline EQ5D data over the summer and early autumn, which will enable us to see how clients have rated their health related quality of life. We will match this against factors such as age and gender. We intend to present these findings to you in the autumn at a time and place convenient to yourselves. Obviously, it will be over a year before we are able to share any findings about whether it has been possible to measure any change, but that is our long term plan.

Thank you again for your contribution to this part of the study. Social Prescribing services, client populations and the NHS will learn from the findings.

**Other News**

Team members Dr Jo Wildman and Professor John Wildman will attend the annual the National Social Prescribing Conference at the King's Fund in London on July 11-12. John has been invited to be on the Economics Panel that will consider the challenges in measuring the value in social prescribing. This conference will be an excellent opportunity to find out about developments in social prescribing nationally.

On July 10th 2019, we had our first Study Steering Group meeting chaired by Professor Sally Wyke of Glasgow University. The Steering Group stated how important research into the impact of social prescribing is and commended us on the scope and execution of the research.

**Contact the Team**

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