

Ways to Wellness Evaluation

Newsletter No 1, June 2018

WELCOME

A warm welcome to this first newsletter from the research team carrying out the evaluation of Ways to Wellness.

You may be aware that we have received funding from the NHS National Institute of Health Research for a 28 month study that starts on July 1st 2018. The funding is from the Public Health Research Programme. It's been a long slog to secure the funds (over 3 years!), but we are delighted to be starting the project.

Research Aim

To find out the effect of Ways to Wellness on service users other family members and the wider community. We also want to find out how much Ways to Wellness costs. Sounds quite easy, but it will be a challenge.

How will we do this?

We will conduct four studies using a number of different research methods. We will mainly focus on people with Type 2 Diabetes.

Study One

Involves the analysis of large data sets of GP and hospital episode data – all anonymised. We will obtain information on 1,600 people with Type 2 diabetes from GP records who will be compared in three ways: (i) with people in practices who don't have the intervention; (ii) with people from the same practice who are eligible but don't take up the intervention, and (iii) people who entered the programme at the beginning with people who entered it later.

Study Two

Will examine health related quality of life and see whether there have been any changes after 12 months from baseline. A single wellbeing measure (EQ 5D) will be collected from **all** people (not only those with Type 2 Diabetes) referred into Ways to Wellness who attend a first appointment, and the same measure will be collected again at 12 months. This part of the study relies on Link Workers to collect the data from each new referral between July 1st 2018 and June 2019. We will reimburse the provider organisations for the time required to collect the data. Other groups around the country who have tried to do this have had very poor response rates. Close working between the research team, First Contact Clinical, Mental Health Concern and Ways to Wellness, will ensure a high response rate at baseline and follow up. We aim to be the first in the UK to achieve this with your help.

Study Three

Compares the costs and effectiveness of Ways to Wellness in relation to existing treatment to see whether Ways to Wellness is value for money compared to other treatments.

Study Four

Doesn't involve numbers, but instead relies on observations and interviews with people using the service to find out how they experience it, what impact it has on them, their families and social networks. Link Workers and Link Worker managers have important perspectives and around 6-10 months into the study, we will be organising focus groups and interviews with Link Workers.





Why are we doing this study?

There are many social prescribing initiatives around the country. But there are no really strong evaluations that demonstrate whether and what effect social prescribing has. We therefore have a golden opportunity to make a really important contribution to the voluntary and community sectors, the NHS and policy makers with the findings

from this study.

How will I know what's happening with the study?

From the autumn, we will have a study website up and running, we will also produce newsletters when we have something to share (but don't worry, we won't be bombarding you!). Any time at all, you can contact members of the research team.

Next steps

Our immediate task is to start collecting the quality of life data (EQ 5D) for Study two on Monday 2nd July 2018. We have been working with Link Worker managers and Link Workers to get this up and running. A huge **THANK YOU** to all of you who will be collecting this information. With your help we will get a great response rate.

Meet the research team

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