

Job description

Post title and post number	Research Fellow 56165
Organisation advertising Description	Health Services Management Centre (HSMC) and Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC), School of Social Policy, College of Social Sciences
Post number	56165
Full-time/Part-time	Part Time (0.6 FTE)
Duration of post	Fixed term until 31 October 2018
Post is open to:	Internal and external candidates
Grade	7
Salary	Starting salary is normally in the range £29,301 to £38,183. With potential progression once in post to £40,523 a year (salary will be pro-rata'd)
Additional information	For informal enquiries please contact Dr Karen Newbigging (Principal Investigator), email: k.v.newbigging@bham.ac.uk or 07974-929367 or Professor John Mohan, email: mohanj@bham.ac.uk or 0121 414 5405
Terms and conditions	Research and analogous

Job summary

The role of the post holder will be to work as part of a team of researchers on a NIHR HS & DR funded project to investigate the role played by third sector organisations in delivering care to people experiencing mental health crises.

The post holder will undertake research under the supervision and guidance of Dr Karen Newbigging of HSMC and TSRC's Director, Professor John Mohan and will be based at Park House on the Edgbaston campus. The post holder will be familiar with using quantitative and qualitative research methods as they will be using different methods to build a rich picture of the role of the voluntary sector in mental health crisis care.

The researcher will be working on the extraction of data on the finances of charities and social enterprises from TSRC's databases, on surveys of providers of services, and on documentary and interview-based investigations of the specific contribution made by these organisations. Advanced quantitative analytical skills are NOT required but we do need someone who is confident in manipulating large datasets

and extracting relevant information from them. In addition experience in undertaking qualitative interviews and analysing qualitative data is required.

The post holder will be expected to work closely with other colleagues in HSMC and TSRC at Birmingham, and for this reason we assume that regular (at least two days a week) presence in Birmingham will be required.

Main duties

- To manage and analyse large-scale datasets on voluntary organisations and their funding, including linkage of data to other socioeconomic or organisational datasets.
- To use these data sources to estimate flows of funding to voluntary organisations in the mental health field
- To design and analyse surveys of organisations in order to capture further information about provision of crisis care services
- To conduct, using documentary sources and interviews, more detailed regional investigations into the role and contribution of voluntary organisations who are providing services for people experiencing mental health crises.
- To undertake qualitative interviews and analyse qualitative data.
- To manage data for appropriate sharing and archiving, including taking appropriate care to ensure preservation of confidentiality where required.
- To present research outputs in academic publications and at seminars and conferences
- To disseminate research findings for a range of research users
- To deal with any problems that may affect the achievement of research objectives and deadlines
- To undertake management and administration arising from research.

Person specification

Essential

- Degree in Social Science, or a related subject such as sociology, political science, social policy, geography, statistics, or economics. The successful candidate will have completed or be about to complete a PhD in one of these fields.
- Demonstrable capacity to use large-scale databases to extract and analyse relevant information
- Demonstrable experience of use of appropriate statistical packages (e.g. SPSS, STATA (preferred))
- Experience of use of documentary sources and interviews to extract relevant financial and administrative information
- Experience in undertaking qualitative interviews and qualitative data analysis.
- Positive attitude towards people with mental health issues.
- Ability to work collaboratively as a member of research team
- Ability to communicate complex information clearly to different audiences in both written and verbal formats.

Desirable

Demonstrable experience of use of appropriate qualitative data programmes (NVivo preferred).

General knowledge of mental health issues.
Experience of the third sector.
Experience of working collaboratively with people with mental health problems.

Further Information

Investigating the contribution of the voluntary sector to mental health crisis care in England

Introduction

The Health Services Management Centre (HSMC), in partnership with the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) at the University of Birmingham, Suresearch and the Open University Business School, has won an award from the National Institute for Health Research Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) Programme to investigate the role of the voluntary sector in mental health crisis care in England. Led by Dr Karen Newbigging, this study will provide a national overview of the range of crisis support offered by the voluntary sector; explore stakeholder views of the relative strengths and weaknesses of different types of voluntary sector crisis services and make recommendations as to what needs to happen for the NHS and Local Authorities to improve how they work with voluntary sector crisis services to ensure that people in a mental health crisis can get the right help at the right time.

Overview of the study

Background

Research and national reports have shown that access to the right kind of support at the right time for people in a mental health crisis can be a problem. Some people, also, avoid seeking help because of fears related to hospital admission or poor treatment, which can result in involuntary detention under the Mental Health Act. As a result, the voluntary sector, also referred to as the third sector, provides support for people in a mental health crisis. This ranges from helplines, peer support, befriending or crisis houses, which provide an alternative to inpatient admission and community support. Voluntary sector support is highly valued because it is informal, focuses on social context and builds relationships with the person in crisis. How widely available these different types of crisis support are, what they provide and how they fit with the crisis services offered by the NHS or Local Authority is not well understood. A literature review for this proposal found that the majority of research has focused on statutory service provision and there is a clear lack of evidence in understanding what the diverse range of voluntary sector organisations (VSOs) can offer and how this might be used to best effect in mental health crisis care.

Aims and methods

The aims of this study are to:

- (a) investigate the range of crisis support offered by VSOs in England
- (b) explore stakeholder views of the relative strengths and weaknesses of different types of voluntary sector services
- (c) recommend what needs to happen for NHS and Local Authority crisis services to work with voluntary sector services better.

This is a multi-method study involving four work packages (WPs). WP1 scopes the contribution of VSOs to mental health crisis care through a national survey of VSOs supplemented by interviews with national stakeholders. This will be underpinned by an analysis of available data on VSOs to 2

identify the different types of VSOs providing support and care to people experiencing a mental health crisis. WP2 involves detailed mapping of the VSO provision, including capturing small scale community based initiatives within two regions to develop a taxonomy of crisis care, which will provide a sampling frame to select two case studies per region to investigate the contribution of VSO provision to crisis care at both a system (WP3) and individual level (WP4). These case studies will be selected to reflect the diversity of the population and geography, which might impede access to support in a crisis. In these case study sites, WP3 will focus on mapping the crisis care system at a local level. Data on activities, interventions and stakeholder perceptions of effectiveness of the voluntary sector contribution to the crisis care pathway will be collected through documentary analysis, a key informant questionnaire, interviews with key stakeholders and focus groups with mental health service users and carers. WP4 will map the crisis care trajectories of 10 service users in each site, from interviews with mental health service users, carers and statutory providers.

Analysis

Results from the national mapping of VSOs will be classified to develop a typology. Data from qualitative interviews will be thematically analysed to address the research questions and triangulated with the mapping data to identify the VSO contribution to an integrated crisis response. Our results will be used to produce guidance on how the NHS can work effectively with VSOs to improve mental health crisis care in England. This will benefit people experiencing a mental health crisis, their families and carers.

Ethical approval

This study will require ethical approval from the Health Research Authority.

Research Timescale

This is a two year project commencing 1st November 2016.

Research Team

The research team is an experienced team bringing together methodological expertise with contextual and theoretical knowledge of the voluntary sector and of mental health. The team members are:

Dr Karen Newbigging, Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham (Chief Investigator)

Alex Davis, Suresearch member and carer

Dr Jenny Harlock, Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham

Professor John Mohan, Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham

Dr James Rees, Open University Business School

People with lived experience of mental health issues will be extensively involved in the conduct of research and three service users are being recruited to the team as co-researchers, supported by Suresearch, a Midlands network of people who use their experience of mental health issues and services in education and research.

There will also be a reference group of service users acting as critical friends to the project. 3

Research governance

Research governance will be provided by a Study Steering Group (SSG) to ensure that the project conforms to standards of good practice, as laid out in the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care. The SSG will also provide expert advice to the research team and membership will, therefore, reflect different interests in ensuring access to high quality crisis care. The Study Steering Group will meet four times during the course of the project and there will also be virtual meetings and correspondence as needed.

Further information

Further information is available from Dr Karen Newbigging
k.v.newbigging@bham.ac.uk and 07974-929367.