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SURESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Presented to Suresearch AGM on Thursday 7th November 2019

About Suresearch

Suresearch was formed, in 2000, by a partnership of academic staff and service users involved in teaching and research in the Department Social work at University of Birmingham (UoB).

For five years, until 2011, Suresearch worked closely with the Centre for Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health, with funding for a part time paid coordinator. Since then, Suresearch has been administered on a voluntary basis by members, with continuing support from the UoB College of Social Science through provision of office accommodation and meeting rooms.

Suresearch aims to promote meaningful service user involvement in mental health education, training and research by:

- educating and influencing mental health educators, trainers and researchers,
- providing training, opportunities and support for service users to use their expertise and experience in education and research.

The experts by experience in our network offer a rich resource of knowledge and skills through:

- contributing to the education and training of mental health practitioners at qualifying and post qualifying levels,
- undertaking research, independently and in collaboration,
- advising researchers and research students in the mental health field,
- membership of professional advisory groups and service user organisations,
- contributing to arts events and festivals to promote mental wellbeing and awareness.

Organisation, meetings and funding

The running of Suresearch is a team effort of members and officers and organised through the Futures Group.

Membership

We have 96 members on our email list, and an additional 12 receiving the postal mailout.

During the year members became aware of the death of Peter Lockett, who attended Writers Group meetings.

During the year, members were informed that Suresearch member, Mark Hillier left his position as Head of Patient and Public Involvement at BSMHFT for a new role with Forward Thinking Birmingham.

Organisation

Officers

Officers elected in November 2018 have served throughout the year.

Office Facilities

Suresearch has use of an office opposite the Courtyard Room in Park House. The office houses our archives, a small number of reference books and computers which are used by authorised members for maintaining our membership database, website, and other Suresearch activities. Members can arrange to access the office to view books and archives by arrangement with the officers.

Mailings

Most members are on the e-mailing list and receive monthly mailing about our meetings plus circulations of events and opportunities of interest. We send a monthly postal mailing on request to those unable to use email.

Monthly Meetings

Suresearch has continued to have [monthly meetings](#) at Park House. Speakers have included:

- December - Robin Price, Sam Cole and Philip Hughes spoke about their roles in the Lottery funded [Changing Futures Together programme](#). The Birmingham based programme is delivered through Birmingham Mind, Shelter and Birmingham Voluntary Services Council.
- January - Daisy King, research project officer, spoke about the newly formed UoB [Centre for Health and Social Care Leadership](#) and their plans for involving people with lived experience.

- February – Tamar Jeynes of Pink Sky Thinking and Suresearch member spoke about the [Mad Studies Group](#) which meets monthly in Birmingham.
- August - Jo Barber, Barbara Norden, Karen Newbigging and Stephen Jeffreys presented on the NIHR funded research study on contributions of the voluntary sector to mental health crisis care in England, covering the strategy used to involve people with lived experience in all aspects of the research, the part played by the Service User Reference Group as a critical friend informing the development of the study, the experience of being a co-researcher on the study, and the main study findings and their implications for improving the services used by people in mental health crises.
- October - Magdalena Furgalska, Doctoral Researcher at the University of Birmingham School of Law, spoke about her ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) funded PhD research project: Achieving Social Justice for Psychiatric Survivors: Capabilities and Advance Consent in Mental Health Law. Presentation slides and Information Sheets are available [here](#).

Funding of Suresearch

A separate financial report for 2018-9 is presented to the Annual General Meeting.

We benefitted from Awards for All Lottery Funding to the end of July 2018 (the Suresearch2018 project). From August, travel expenses have been paid from Suresearch reserves, which have accrued from donations and a payment from the Voluntary Sector Crisis Care in recognition of the contribution of some Suresearch members to the project.

Suresearch Online

Suresearch has a website built by members in December 2017. As a result of the Suresearch 2018 project we now also have a presence on Twitter and Facebook.

Members are encouraged to submit items for posting on the website, under the following categories:

- Reports on members activities, including involvement in research, training and other work, through Suresearch,
- Articles, and opinion pieces from members,
- Members' creative writing.

Special Projects

Suresearch 2018 Project

This Awards for All Lottery funded project last for one year from 1st August 2018. The three project funding streams for this project were:

- fares for attending meetings and training

- payments to members for providing peer training and support, making regular contributions to website maintenance, and developing resources and opportunities for members.
- Website maintenance costs and training sessions for members interested developing their skills in digital media and contribution to Suresearch's online presence.

With the funding from the project we have:

- provided professional training sessions for members on posting WordPress blogs, use of Twitter and Facebook;
- provided one to one peer support (with Stephen Jeffreys) for members to help consolidate skills and confidence gained from the training sessions;
- implemented technical improvements to the Suresearch website with professional assistance;
- launched a Suresearch presence on Twitter and Facebook;
- subscribed and set up a Google G-Suite account for Suresearch which provides extra online storage, and email addresses linked to our website domain name.
- established online archives of minutes and other key documents, using G-Suite, which can be available to officers and members.
- implemented use of a Mailchimp generated newsletter for email communications with members with links to documents in the new archive, instead of the previous use of blind copies and attachments.
- Updated our membership database and moved it to the G-Suite cloud storage.

All the professional assistance has been from Phil Choi, and Suresearch is thankful to Phil for the patient and high quality training that he has provided.

Suresearch is currently working on formation of a **Suresearch Digital Media Group** to work alongside its existing groups so that members can support each other in developing individual skills and confidence and produce material for our online platforms - the News and Views blog section of the website, Twitter and Facebook

Suresearch Online Platforms

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Research

During the year, members have continued to be involved in a variety of mental health research projects, by providing advice and working collaboratively.

Research Projects

Research Project on Role of Voluntary Sector in Mental Health Crisis Care

Suresearch was named as a partner in the NIHR funded research project investigating the scope and role of voluntary sector provision for those experiencing a mental health crisis, led by Dr Karen Newbigging (HSMC and Suresearch member). Other Suresearch members are involved in various capacities on the project. Alex Davis has been on the research team, Jo Barber was on the Study steering Group and Barbara Norden was a co-researcher. Stephen Jeffreys and Mohammed Zaman have served on the Service User Reference Group which was chaired by Jo.

The two-year project has now been concluded and the full report is awaiting publication. Its aims are:

- to identify the contribution of the voluntary sector to crisis care in mental health
- to make policy and practice recommendations to strengthen the crisis care response for people experiencing mental health crisis.

The project has included co-production with service users and carers as researchers and advisors, and an independent 'user-led' review on the lived experience involvement on the project was commissioned. and involves a national survey, selected regional mapping of relevant initiatives and interviews with providers individual users and their families.

Further information on the project can be on the [Suresearch](#) website.

Jo Barber's Research on Spirituality

Suresearch member, Jo Barber has continued with her [research on spirituality and its role in recovery](#), looking at why some find their religion helpful and others find it a problem. She is currently working on a qualitative section of the study, interviewing service users about their experiences of recovery, focusing particularly on the spiritual and religious aspects.

Suresearch collaborating in bids for research funding

Suresearch collaborates with academic researchers in bids for researching funding by providing advice and lived experience involvement in conducting the research when bids are successful. Projects this year have included:

- a National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) first stage grant proposal being developed in the UoB School of Psychology, focusing on unmet needs of individuals accessing IAPT who have relatives with addictions.

Research Groups and events attended by members

Members have attended a number of research groups and events, including:

- the Mental Health Policy Research Unit's Lived Experience Working Group, led by University College, London.
- Birmingham Institute of Mental Health Young Persons Advisory Group.
- Advisory group for Institute of Mental Health at Nottingham University research in Trans Cranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS).
- Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) Research service user involvement group
- The [National Association of Disabled Staff Network \(NADSN\) conference](#) on intersectionality in higher education.

Involvement in Teaching

Suresearch members, including Janet Qureshi and David Goley, continue to participate in teaching on the UoB social work courses. Members are also involved in teaching and course management committees for, clinical and forensic psychology, mental health nursing and other practitioner training at the University of Birmingham and elsewhere.

This includes the Collaborative Learning Initiative each January which brings together trainee social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and nurses.

Suresearch members attend the Expert by Experience Committee (EBESC) for the UoB clinical and forensic psychology doctorate courses; it coordinates lived experience involvement in the courses and related research.

Suresearch Groups

Suresearch has a number of smaller group meetings open to all members:

Future of Suresearch (Futures) Group

The [Futures group](#) has continued to meet when required and focused on the future and day to day running of Suresearch, preparing funding bids, and planning the Suresearch2018 project. It has met three times during the year.

Inpatient Care Forum

The Inpatient Care Forum (IPCF) focuses primarily on Inpatient issues. Topics discussed are often linked to members' activities. It has met three times during the year.

Two attenders are Governors of the BSMHFT. Three others have been closely involved with the University's Health Management Study Centre's research project on the role of the voluntary sector in mental health crisis care. One member continues to develop and refine her research project on spirituality and personal recovery.

A forthcoming activity is involvement in the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) project in the College of Social Sciences (University of Birmingham) for staff members, which Suresearch member and lecturer, Maureen Smojkis is coordinating.

Writers and Readers Group

The Writers and Readers Group provides an opportunity for members to support each other with their writing and share information about local and national events and festivals, linked to the written word, music and mental health. The meetings have also provided members with a space to share their work as well as opportunities for spontaneous writing. In addition, the meetings have been used by members to share the work of authors that have inspired them. The group has met each month in the last year.

Members contributed a range of work for the Suresearch website as part of the Suresearch 2017 lottery funded project. This includes poetry, prose and reflective writing.

Members have been involved in various external events, including:

- the Birmingham annual 'Arts All over the Place' event concerned with mental health and the arts.
- the Survivors Art Open Day held at the University of Birmingham, Muirhead Tower.
- sharing their work and views at local events.

During the year, Suresearch member, Phil Hill's latest book of poetry entitled, 'Love/ Resistance/ Rebellion' has been published by Chipmunka. Phil has gifted a copy to Suresearch which is with our archives in the Suresearch Office.

Campaigns, consultations other activities

Members have provided personal input to various consultations on service changes in their own areas and attended a variety of meeting bringing together service providers, commissioners, service users and carers throughout the Midlands.

Barbara Norden has given a presentation about Suresearch at the BSMHFT Positive Mental Health Group.

Stephen Jeffreys, October 2019

Appendix – Abbreviations

UoB – University of Birmingham

HSMC – Health Service Management Centre

NIHR – National Institute for Health Research

HSDR – Health services and Delivery Programme

BSMHFT – Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust