



Website: www.suresearch.org.uk

Twitter: [@SuresearchMH](https://twitter.com/SuresearchMH)

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SURESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT 2020-22

Presented to Suresearch AGM on Wednesday 2nd February 2022

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 our Futures (Future of Suresearch) Group.

Membership

We have 86 members on our email list, and an additional eight on a postal mailing list.

Since the last AGM, members became aware of the death of David Goley, Lorna Peters and Elizabeth Cottam who had been involved in Suresearch meetings and activities.

Impact of Coronavirus

We responded quickly to the situation by moving our meetings online using Zoom from April 2020. This enabled us to keep going and it has suited some members. The main monthly meetings have continued throughout, along with the Inpatient Care Forum. However, we are aware that not all members have had the necessary resources to join online meetings and attendance at the monthly meetings gradually declined. We decided to postpone our AGMs in 2020 and 2021. Unfortunately, our plans to hold in person AGM in January 2022 were thwarted by the Omicron variant, and we have decided to go ahead with an online AGM in on February 2nd, 2022, so that our officer team can be refreshed and expanded.

Organisation

Officers

Officers elected in November 2019 have served throughout, apart from Anne Lloyd who resigned as Assistant Secretary in August 2021 due to family commitments.

In December 2022, Suresearch members agreed some constitutional amendments to revise and expand the officer team so that the secretary role which Stephen Jeffreys has fulfilled is split between several officers. This new team will be elected at the 2022 AGM and consists of:

- Membership Secretary
- Correspondence and Activities Secretary
- Minutes and Meetings Secretary
- Digital Media Secretary and IT Coordinator
- Assistant Secretary
- Treasurer

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. However, use of the office remains restricted by the impact of the pandemic.

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 use Mailchimp for our newsletters and pay for a Google Workspace account for our email and data storage facilities. Prior to the covid lockdowns, when the University was closed, we sent a monthly postal mailing on request to those unable to use email.

Monthly Meetings

Suresearch has continued to have **monthly meetings**, which have been online since April 2020. A number of academic researchers have attended meetings to discuss involvement in their research projects.

Funding of Suresearch

A separate financial report for 2019-22 is presented to the Annual General Meeting.

We do not currently have any funding other than occasional donations. Travel expenses for any in person meetings and website and other IT costs have been paid from Suresearch reserves. Consequently, we have reduced the travel expenses payable to a maximum of £10 per person per meeting unless higher travel costs arising from disability are authorised by the treasurer.

Suresearch Online

Suresearch has a website built by members in December 2017, together with 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.

Before the covid lockdowns we had begun to form a Suresearch Digital Media Group to work alongside our 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 as individuals and meeting with mental health researchers who have approached Suresearch and attended the online monthly meetings. These include projects and funding applications concerned with:

- restorative justice regarding restraint in psychiatric settings
- weight gain and anti psychotic medication,
- prescribing for severe mental illness,
- the role of occupational therapy in reducing violence in mental health inpatient settings.

Research Projects

Research Project on Contribution of the Voluntary Sector to Mental Health Crisis Care in England

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). This project is now concluded. For further information see:

- [Early report on Suresearch website](#)
- [Project page on UoB website](#) including links to independent evaluation of service involvement, journal article and illustrated summary
- [Full report on NIHR 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 delayed qualitative section of the study, interviewing more service users about their experiences of recovery, focusing particularly on the spiritual and religious aspects with a focus on those for who religion has proved unhelpful.

Involvement in Teaching

Suresearch members 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. This last met in 2020 but is being revived in a shortened form in February 2022.

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** meets when required and focused on the future and day to day running of Suresearch. It has met during 2021 to make plans for dividing up the Secretary's role and reforming an expanding officers' team. Constitutional amendments were approved by our December 2021 meeting to put these into effect.

Inpatient Care Forum

The Inpatient Care Forum (IPCF) has focused primarily on Inpatient issues. Topics discussed are often linked to members' activities. It has met regularly since March 2020 and was the first of our meetings to briefly revert to in person meetings in late 2021. Members attending have valued the peer support element of the meetings during a time of increased social isolation for many.

Suresearch members are currently discussing renaming this group and widening its remit to include sharing experiences of both inpatient and community mental health services and considering how these experiences might inform research and teaching.

Writers and Readers Group

The Writers and Readers Group has provided 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. The group has not met since March 2020 due not being able to hold in person meetings and availability of key members of the group.

Campaigns, consultations other activities

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

Stephen Jeffreys, January 2022

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