

SURESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

Presented to Suresearch AGM on Thursday 2nd February 2023

About Suresearch

[Suresearch](http://www.suresearch.org.uk) 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).

From 2006 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 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 83 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 Gordon Parsons who played an active role in Suresearch meetings and activities for a number of years.

Aftermath of Coronavirus pandemic

In the second half of 2022 we resumed in-person meetings at Park House, and we have been working on developing these as hybrid meetings, offering a continuing opportunity to join the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Organisation

Officers

Officers elected in February have served throughout.

Our team of officers 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.

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.

Meetings

In the second half of 2022 we resumed in-person meetings at Park House, and we have been working on developing these as hybrid meetings, offering a continuing opportunity to join the meeting remotely via Zoom.

We have re-branded the Inpatient Care Forum as a Mental Health Care Forum (MHCF) to recognise that these meetings have lately not been limited to inpatient services. The MHCF was our first group to return to in-person meetings, but in the autumn, we decided to focus on having just one meeting per month until we have found new funding.

Funding of Suresearch

A separate financial report for 2022-23 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. We are currently working on an application to the National Lottery Awards for All fund.

We are currently establishing new banking arrangements with Lloyds Bank after the Nationwide Building Society decided that it would no longer offer the 'Treasurers' pass book account which we used. The Lloyds Bank account is now open with online banking, but we are now working on best use of the account for the needs of Suresearch..

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

Website: www.suresearch.org.uk

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

Facebook: Suresearch [@SuresearchMH](https://www.facebook.com/SuresearchMH)

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
- How to help people avoid the side effect of weight gain with anti-psychotic medication by helping them change their life style.
- 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/religion of service users and its role in recovery. This is a qualitative study, using one to one interviews of service users. She is looking at the interaction between the mental health journey and the spiritual/religious journey as recovery progresses, focusing particularly on

why some people actually find their spirituality/religion unhelpful. She has now finished all the interviews, they have all been transcribed and coded, and she is currently putting together the findings. She hopes to have written something that might be submitted for publication later this year.

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 annual Collaborative Learning Initiative which brings together trainee social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and nurses. This is currently being reviewed with a view to re-launching in 2024.

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.

Mental Health Care Forum

Previously the Inpatient Care Forum (IPCF), this group shares experiences of both inpatient and community mental health services and considers how these experiences might inform research and teaching. Members attending have valued the peer support element of the meetings. Due to our funding situation, we are currently running this group and the research focused monthly meeting as one monthly meeting.

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 is not currently meeting.

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 meetings bringing together service providers, commissioners, service users and carers throughout the Midlands.

Stephen Jeffreys, February 2023

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