

SURESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

Presented to Suresearch AGM on Thursday 7th March 2024

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).

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 82 members on our email list, and an additional eight on a postal mailing list.

Organisation

Officers

Officers elected at our last AGM have served throughout.

Our team of officers consists of:

- Membership Secretary - Stephen Jeffreys
- Correspondence and Activities Secretary _ Jo Barber
- Minutes and Meetings Secretary - Barbara Norden
- Digital Media Secretary and IT Coordinator - Stephen Jeffreys
- Assistant Secretary _ Gary O'Brien
- Treasurer - Arshad Butt

Office Facilities

Suresearch has the 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

Almost all 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 2023 we have continued in-person meetings at Park House and have continued to work on developing these as effective hybrid meetings via Zoom. We thank Jo Barber for persevering with persisting challenges with the equipment in the meeting rooms.

In 2023, we re-branded the Inpatient Care Forum as a Mental Health Care Forum (MHCF) to recognise that these meetings had a broader focus than inpatient services, but in autumn 2023, we decided to focus on having just one meeting per month until we have found new funding. Re-launching the MHCF is at the centre of our current funding bid.

Funding of Suresearch

A separate financial report for 2023-24 is presented to the Annual General Meeting.

We do not currently have any funding other than occasional donations. Travel expenses for in person meetings and website and other IT costs have been paid from Suresearch reserves. Travel expenses are currently 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 submitting an application to the National Lottery Awards for All fund.

Suresearch now has its bank account with Lloyds Bank. During the year we adopted a new Finance Policy to govern use of the account, particularly use of the Debit Card.

There is an amendment before the 2024 AGM to clarify that the Suresearch accounting year will, in future, run from 1st February to 31st January, with a report to the subsequent AGM which would normally be in March.

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.

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:

- Prescribing psychiatric medication
- significant changes of circumstance for 'people with disabilities / who are disabled and those who provide care support for them (paid and unpaid)'.
- "parity of esteem" between mental health and physical health
- how community pharmacies can help children with ADHD and their parents or guardians.

Research Projects

Jo Barber's Research on Spirituality and mental health recovery: The Processes of spiritual and mental recovery in mental health patients: a qualitative study.

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 conducted 41 interviews which have all been transcribed and coded. She has now written the project up and submitted it to a journal. She is currently waiting to hear about whether or not it has been accepted for publication in this journal. Jo, presented her findings at the BSMHFT Research and Development Showcase event on 8 September, 2023, where it was well-received. She is hoping to disseminate her findings more widely in the coming months. She thanks Suresearch for all their help, both those who kindly participated in the study and those who gave her support and encouragement without which this would have not been completed.

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

During 2023, Suresearch members have worked with Yvette Brown at UoB to deliver mental health training for general nursing students.

Suresearch Groups

Suresearch has a number of smaller group meetings open to all members, which have been very popular with members. Due to our present funding situation, these are currently not running:

Future of Suresearch (Futures) Group

The **Futures group** focuses 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.

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.

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 2024

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