

# ENHANCE RESEARCH PROJECT

Older adult forensic mental health patients:  
defining needs, barriers, facilitators and ‘what works’

**Dr Chris Griffiths**  
**Dr Kate Walker**  
**Professor Birgit Völlm**  
**Dr Jen Yates**  
**Professor Tom Dening**  
**Dr Vincent Egan**  
**Andrew Lowe**



“This presentation presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) under its Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme (Grant Reference Number PB-PG-1217-20028). The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.”

- Forensic mental health patients sit in a complex intersection of health, social care, and criminal justice systems
- In the UK around 19-30% of medium and high secure patients are over 50 and this proportion is likely to grow as people live longer (Völlm et al. 2017; Di Lorito et al. 2018)
- Specialist forensic inpatient services are required for older adults experiencing mental disorder who pose a risk to themselves or others (Shah, 2006)

## ENHANCE BACKGROUND



- Older adult forensic patients have complex histories e.g. childhood abuse, substance abuse, cognitive difficulties, complex mental health histories (Lightbody et al. 2010; Di Lorito et al. 2018)
- People with long term mental health disorders experience:
  - Challenges associated with old age earlier
  - Significantly reduced life expectancy (15-20 years) (Chesney et al., 2014)
- When compared to younger adult forensic inpatients, older adults have not shown improvements at discharge on measures of severe disturbance, emotional well-being or risk, and experience a decline in personal wellbeing (Griffiths, 2018)
- Suggests needs of older adults not being met in relation to mental health, physical health and wellbeing – need to know why?

## ENHANCE BACKGROUND



R1. What are the levels of wellbeing, recovery related quality of life, cognitive functioning, and health related quality of life in older (aged 55 and over) secure inpatients and those based in the community and how can this inform development of adequate service to address their needs?

R2. From a staff and patient perspective, what are the barriers and facilitators to progress in terms of quality of life, health, wellbeing, risk and lower levels of security? How can these barriers be addressed to facilitate progress?

R3. From a staff and patient perspective, what interventions do and do not work, how, when, why and for who to enhance progress in terms of quality of life, health, wellbeing, risk and lower levels of security?

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS ENHANCE



- Interview 36 service users age 55 plus (high, medium, low secure and community)
- Background details from SystemOne, questionnaires for description of sample (e.g., wellbeing, quality of life, IQ, personal restrictiveness)
- Interview 35 staff members with experience working with age 55 plus forensic mental health patients



## ENHANCE



What intervention and creative therapy provision is there for older forensic mental health patients?

- Eight articles only found
- Distinct lack of research that has examined interventions for older forensic mental health patients
- Quality of articles fairly low – no RCT, control group comparisons, descriptive statistics only, more qualitative
- A wide range of intervention and activities available
- Some interventions were not age appropriate, some inaccessible (due to physical health) and for the longer-term patients, interventions became repetitive and boring

**PROGRESS:**  
**1. LITERATURE REVIEW**  
**COMPLETED**



- Ethics (IRAS/HRA) submitted: REC meeting 25.11.19
- PILs, consent, recruitment posters, interview questionnaires finalised
- Recruitment started: Identification of potential sites and PIs, trusts identified with positive response includes:
  - Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
  - Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
  - Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
  - Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
  - Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

## PROGRESS: 2. ETHICS AND RECRUITMENT



- Submit review publication: Dec 2019
- Scope and undertake policy review: Dec/Jan 2019  
-2020
- Recruitment of sites and PIs:
  - Staff: Dec 2020
  - Patients: Feb 2020
- Interviews:
  - Staff complete: April 2020
  - Patients complete: Oct 2020
- Data analysis (transcribed, analysed, written up):
  - Staff: Aug 2020
  - Patients: Jan 2021

**FINAL REPORT: APR 2021**

## TIMELINES







# THANK YOU ANY THOUGHTS, FEEDBACK OR QUESTIONS?

Dr Chris Griffiths  
[Chris.Griffiths@nhft.nhs.uk](mailto:Chris.Griffiths@nhft.nhs.uk)

Dr Kate Walker  
[Kate.Walker@nhft.nhs.uk](mailto:Kate.Walker@nhft.nhs.uk)

