



**Research
& Innovation**

Part of St Andrew's Healthcare

Research & Innovation 2022/23



Transforming lives through research

Chair's introduction

As Chair of the Research Committee, I am delighted to present the 2022/23 Annual Report. It has been a period of significant change within St Andrew's and indeed the entire healthcare sector. The movement out of lockdown and the reduction in Covid infections began to change the way we met with others and this in turn influenced research conduct with more face-to-face interactions becoming possible again. Our research at St Andrew's has seamlessly adapted to these changing circumstances, as you will see in this report where we have a large number of high-quality projects that are being conducted by members of St Andrew's staff, as well as researchers from our partner organisations. In addition, the Research Committee has developed a research and innovation strategy which will form the focus of research at St Andrew's in the coming years. I want to express my thanks for the work of the Research Committee, as well as the Research & Innovation Team over the past 12 months.



Stanton Newman
Research & Innovation Chair,
St Andrew's Healthcare

A message from our CEO



Vivienne McVey
CEO, St Andrew's Healthcare

By 2028, our vision is to create a society in which everyone living with a mental health need is heard, valued and has hope for their future. Key to that is our ambition to be renowned for our charitable investment in research and education that improves the lives of those we serve.

It is well recognised that research-active hospitals have better patient outcomes. As the new CEO, it has been exciting to discover just how much research and innovation is already going on within the Charity. Of particular note are studies that support the development of new clinicians, translational projects that take research findings and turn them into practice to improve the wellbeing of our patients and service users, and innovative projects at the cutting edge of technology.

Our new strategy will build upon the strong research base that has been developed over the last few years – and I look forward to continued growth in this area and a meaningful future for St Andrew's.

CAMHS East Midlands Collaboration



The CAMHS East Midland Provider Collaborative aims to reduce the reliance on inpatient secure care and to enhance care in the community. An East Midlands partnership was established to work collaboratively to improve quality, efficiency and care outcomes of CAMHS services; this includes Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire NHS, Chesterfield Royal Hospital, Shoen Clinic in Birmingham, as well as St Andrew's Healthcare and NHFT, who is at the heart of the Provider Collaborative.

The research team are currently evaluating the progress towards achieving the collaboration's aims, by completing and reporting back on a separate evaluation every six months, until December 2024. Funding received for the evaluation supported the employment of two research assistants in April 2022, Kristina and Sarrah; later joined by two part-time research assistants, Isobel and Esther.

Our evaluation team is engaging with clinical and senior management staff, as well as with patients and carers, in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the functioning of the Provider Collaborative. The research team has already produced two evaluation reports. These include a summary of various perspectives on the collaborative functioning, an analysis into its successes and current setbacks, as well as a list of recommendations to improve the new ways of working.



Sarrah Fatima
Research Assistant

Kristina Brenisin
Senior Research Assistant

"The staff've been really caring, genuine with my son and really trying to help him and putting him on a right path. You know being away from family, being away from loved ones and staff became like an extended family."

Carer

"We set ourselves a target, which was to put children and young people at the heart of everything we do. And we're going to keep focusing on that."

NHFT Staff

"The CAMHS project is a wonderful example of translational research. I have had the opportunity to interview members of staff who have seen children and their families experience the benefits of service improvement on a daily basis. There is more work to be done and I am proud to work in a team that is dedicated and passionate about improving health outcomes."

Esther Gathii, Research Assistant

Research Secondments

Consultant Clinical Psychologists, Dr Inga Stewart and Dr Charlie Staniforth are now 18 months into their 2 year clinical research secondments with the R&I Team. Priscilla Maziveyi has recently joined the team on secondment as a research assistant.



Dr Inga Stewart
Consultant Clinical Psychologist
and Clinical Research Fellow

Inga is leading on a research programme, that seeks to co-produce research into care planning in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society. She has been working with a steering group that involves people who are living with dementia, to develop a new toolkit made up of Practice Standard Statements, a checklist and hints and tips to help care teams involve people with dementia in writing their own care plans.

Supported by the literature and existing evidence-base, and informed by their own experiences, the steering group have developed Practice Standard Statements, which underpin the values of co-production of care planning. These standards are inclusive and respectful of all those affected by dementia. They champion the partnership between the person living with dementia and all those involved in their care, and set the standard on what is expected from a genuinely co-produced care plan. The Checklist details the identifiers of co-production when used to demonstrate that the standards are being met and can also be used as a self-assessment or audit tool. The Hints and Tips can be used to help overcome any barriers when co-producing a care plan.

[Find out more about people living with dementia as co-researchers in the co-production of care planning | Co-Production Collective \(coproductioncollective.co.uk\)](#)



Dr Charlie Staniforth
Consultant Clinical Psychologist
and Clinical Research Fellow

Over the last 18 months, Charlie has been working with a really enthusiastic group of young people and professionals and together they have developed a trauma-informed sexual health toolkit. The toolkit is now ready to be piloted in CAMHS inpatient units across the East Midlands CAMHS Provider Collaborative. This is really exciting as clinicians, in both St Andrew's and the NHS, will trial the toolkit with young people and all those involved will feedback their views regarding whether they found the toolkit helpful and if they recommend any improvements. As well as making sure the toolkit works effectively (validation), Charlie will analyse the information from the completed toolkits to better understand the sexual health and wellbeing needs of young people using inpatient services, with the aim of helping services to meet those needs.

Interviews have also been taking place with a range of clinicians across the East Midlands CAMHS Provider Collaborative asking them what they think are the barriers to sexual health assessment in CAMHS inpatient units. The data is being analysed for themes; this information will assist with how best to implement the toolkit for clinical use and how to try and overcome any barriers that have been identified.

A third stream of work, which informed the development of the toolkit, was an audit on the conduct and recording of CAMHS sexual health assessments on admission. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) of admissions were also looked at to assess the levels and types of potential trauma present in young people using our services. This data has been analysed and is currently being written up into a paper that will be submitted to an academic journal.

Innovation and Technology



The collaboration between MeOmics and St Andrew's Healthcare is already delivering results.

The MeOmics Vision

MeOmics is an innovative start-up company, recently spun out of Cardiff University, which is developing a platform to improve the process for identifying new mental healthcare drug therapies. Ultimately, it promises to provide clinicians with diagnostic support for mental illness through a blood sample. This could eventually be transformational for people who experience serious mental ill-health.

The Opportunity for Collaboration

We initiated conversations with MeOmics to identify areas for collaboration. The golden opportunity came with a joint application for a Biomedical Catalyst grant from Innovate UK. This involved proving and scaling up the MeOmic's technology to generate patient-specific nerve cell networks and assess responses to drug combinations using multi-electrode arrays. The ultimate aim is to improve drug discovery to achieve better patient outcomes.

Partnership Success

The partnership has been critical to the success of the Innovate UK project. Without the participation of patients and controls willing to provide a sample of blood and some medical history, there would be no project. The St Andrew's team have set about recruiting participants professionally and efficiently, so much so that we are now ahead of schedule. The combined team looks forward to seeing this project succeed and advancing our partnership as MeOmics develops.

Using Virtual Reality to Support Veterans

In veteran populations, research has predominantly focused solely on PTSD, despite its high co-morbidity with social anxiety. Few veteran studies have explored social anxiety treatment or veteran perceptions of virtual reality (VR) as a way of delivering treatment.

A study, led by Dr Louise Winter-Oakman (one of our Health Psychologists in our Community Services), looked at using a VR social engagement program, specially developed by OxfordVR to reduce social anxiety in a sample of ten veterans. The VR was able to create a safe space for veterans to practice social interactions and expose themselves to environments they would avoid in real life. We found that the VR social engagement program was an effective tool in facilitating exposure therapy for social anxiety in veterans. Whilst further research is recommended on treatment effectiveness, results showed that the program was well-received and perceived as beneficial – with reported improvement in social anxiety post-treatment.

This year, the Veterans Mental Health Complex Treatment Service launched a VR clinic for veterans presenting with social anxiety.



"I went to a concert recently with my girlfriend; I would never have done that before."

"Before I started I couldn't go in supermarkets and crowded places."

Physical Health



Move More Toolkit

Following completion of her PhD within our Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in 2022, Dr Justine Anthony, (Research Associate, Loughborough University) obtained funding to conduct a further research study. This follow-on project had the aim of improving both the physical and mental wellbeing of patients in our care by co-designing a physical activity toolkit with patients and staff.

Following a co-production process that involved multiple interviews with 19 staff and patients, informal conversations during community meetings in 10 different wards, including some from low secure, medium secure and our Birmingham site, two versions of the physical activity toolkit were produced: "Move More for Staff" and "Move More for Patients"

The booklets were launched in October 2022 and distributed across wards. The toolkit has been well received; especially the self-monitoring tools (the starchart and activity planner) which have been highlighted as supporting motivation to be active.

As a direct consequence of the launch of the toolkit and the associated media communication, other organisations nationwide have contacted Justine with a request for the toolkit to be used in their organisations. These include NHS trusts, and other mental health charities in England, Scotland and Ireland.

Justine has now completed her 'tenure' with the R&I team, having conducted research over a four-year period with us. She has been a valuable member of our Peer Review Team and we wish her well in her continued research journey at Loughborough University.



Dr Justine Anthony
Research Associate,
Loughborough University



Dr Poppy Gardiner
Researcher, Loughborough
University

Sleep

Dr Poppy Gardiner has also now completed her PhD at Loughborough University. Her project with St Andrew's focussed on improving the quality of sleep for our patients as poor sleep has been identified as a significant clinical issue in secure psychiatric care.

21 patients from our Medium and Low Secure Divisions, along with 10 staff who took part in a focus group, were involved in Poppy's three-year study. Poppy used what she learned in these conversations to design a sleep improvement project that asked service users to increase their physical activity and spend less time sitting down and/or napping. Watches, similar to FitBits, were given out to monitor activity. Feedback from the study showed that patients were more active than

usual, from doing more light physical activity to doing more moderate-vigorous physical activity; they also went to sleep earlier and woke up earlier!

Poppy has authored and published her systematic review in *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology* and presented a poster at the World Sleep Congress in Rome, March 2022, which won the best poster award.

Another exciting output from the project is an e-learning module called 'The Importance of Sleep'. This is available to St Andrew's staff and was co-produced with Dr Keith Jenkins, Consultant Clinical Neuropsychologist, and patients.

Poppy has now taken on a new research position in the USA; we will miss her at peer review and we wish her well as Dr Gardiner!

External Collaborations



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Why Are We Stuck In Hospital?

This national study, which first featured in our 2021/22 Annual Report, has now completed. The project, which was led by the University of Birmingham and the rights-based organisation, Changing Our Lives, started in 2021. Entitled 'Why Are We Stuck In Hospital?', the research drew on the experiences of people with learning disabilities and/or autism who are in hospital, their families and front-line staff to understand how more people could be supported to lead more ordinary lives in the community.

Findings informed a national policy guide, which gives people's top ten tips for helping them to leave hospital. This guide, along with the other resources, such as a free training video for care staff, are available here: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/social-policy/departments/social-work-social-care/research/why-are-we-stuck-in-hospital.aspx>; and the full research report will be out later in 2023.

The research team also linked up with Birmingham-based Ikon Gallery – to commission an original exhibition (7-19 March) that tried to amplify the voices of people in hospital and share their experiences with a wider audience.



The HaSB-IDD trial – exploring cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for men with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and harmful sexual behaviour

Our Essex site is taking part in an NIHR-funded randomised controlled trial (RCT) led by the University of Kent. The trial will test whether a group cognitive behaviour therapy called SOTSEC-ID (Sex Offenders Treatment Service Collaboration- Intellectual Disabilities) works as a treatment for men with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). Dr Eve Hepburn, Consultant Psychologist in Essex, is leading a team of assistant psychologists, who have been trained to conduct this specialised CBT therapy.

Men with learning disabilities and harmful sexual behaviour often get arrested and tried in court. They may then end up in secure hospital services, detained under the Mental Health Act, where they can get stuck for years without any help to change their behaviour. These men need a treatment that has been shown to work, in order

to leave hospital, lead less restricted lives, and live safely in the community.

There has only been a small amount of research on this kind of group CBT for men who fall into this category. The research so far suggests the SOTSEC-ID treatment is promising but the research to date has only looked at men before and after this treatment. The treated men have not been compared to men who get different treatment (so-called 'treatment as usual'), which is an important comparison for showing that it was definitely the SOTSEC-ID treatment that made the difference (and not just the passage of time or standard treatment for example).

The study is just getting started and is due to be completed in the summer of 2025, so watch this space...

The Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma

The Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma (CDCT) also has a comprehensive research programme that supports the core aim to advance clinical practice to achieve better outcomes for people who have experienced repeated incidents of trauma. Highlights for 2022/23 include: publishing six journal papers and being awarded an international publishing award, establishing new conference and research partnerships with NHS, University and not for profit organisations in the US and UK and launching ten 'research skills for clinicians' workshops. Full details can be found in the CDCT's annual report, which can be accessed here: [Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma » St Andrew's Healthcare \(stah.org\)](https://stah.org)



Photographed by **Richard Durham**,
Groundsman at St Andrew's
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Registered office: St Andrew's Healthcare, Billing Road, Northampton, NN1 5DG

Registered Charity Number 1104951

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