



Making Research Count

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10

1. INTRODUCTION

Making Research Count is a national research dissemination initiative, run regionally across the country by 11 universities. This is the 2009-10 annual report for the Making Research Count programme run by the University of York. The other 10 universities involved in Making Research Count are Bedfordshire, Brighton, Central Lancashire, East Anglia, Keele, King's College London, Northumbria (in partnership with Teesside), Salford and the Open University. Making Research Count is funded regionally via subscriptions from member agencies, including local authorities, health and voluntary organisations.

Each university determines the shape of its programme, and this is largely dependent on the wishes and requirements of its subscribers, as well as the level of subscription income. The objective of Making Research Count is, however, consistent nationally in promoting knowledge-based practice in social work and social care.

Currently, the University of York's Making Research Count programme is funded by subscriptions from the social services departments from 8 local authorities in the Yorkshire & Humberside region – these being East Riding, Hull, Leeds, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Wakefield and York. All 8 are subscribers for both Adults and Children & Families.

2. NATIONAL UPDATE

During the year 2009-10, there are a number of national Making Research Count activities to report:

- Making Research Count was commissioned and successfully delivered the 2009-10 Children's Workforce Development Council's practitioner-led research programme. Following the general election, however, this programme will unfortunately cease to run
- Making Research Count will be supporting the National Institute of Health Research's School for Social Care Research, including hosting a series of launch and dissemination events during 2010-11
- Working as a delivery partner with SCIE, in the DCSF funded Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services - C4EO. The four core partners in C4EO are the National Children's Bureau, the National Foundation of Educational Research, the Social Care Institute for Excellence, and Research in Practice (RiP)
- Collaboration in the production of a series of research briefings. Originally commissioned by the Department of Health and known as Quality Protects Research Briefings, they subsequently became Every Child Matters Research and Practice Briefings: children and families and are published by DfES/DCSF. All briefings can be downloaded from the Making Research Count national website (www.makingresearchcount.org.uk)
- Making Research Count regional teams collaborate to produce 'Research News', which provides a brief account of some of the recent research which has taken place. All items have electronic links to either the published reports or to the email addresses of the researchers, and are designed to represent the diversity of topics in both child and family care and in adult social care actively research by the 11 universities. These are accessible via the Making Research Count website.

3. THE 2009-10 UNIVERSITY OF YORK PROGRAMME

Overview and Update

As in previous years, the programme of events delivered by the University of York was based on:

- Attracting staff with operational, policy or training responsibilities
- Ensuring the programme met the wishes and requirements of subscribing agencies
- Covering the full range of service areas and user groups across social work and social care
- Providing a range of different types of events, including research briefings, joint adults and children's seminars, and conferences.

In June 2010, a meeting was held with all subscribing agency key contacts to review the programme and agree plans to move forward. The meeting was both valuable and productive, a summary of the main items discussed includes:

- Venues – adequate parking is a necessity for Making Research Count events, and so the use of non-university venues should become more regular. This will have a cost implication. Each subscriber has been asked to consider any suitable (and preferably cheap or free!) venues might be available in their locality, as this would also mean that Making Research Count could 'tour the region', which would also improve accessibility and time efficiency for those subscribers much further away from York
- Paying speakers fees – this is set to continue and whilst Making Research Count does everything it can to avoid paying higher 'consultancy' fees (rather trying to persuade speakers to negotiate to something much more reasonable), this is a factor which is being worked through for the 2010-11 budget. Securing quality presenters was felt to be the most important driver as opposed to cost
- In the last year to 18 months, several 'larger' events have been held, which have been extremely successful – extending these to a full day (they have been around 4 or 5 hours) would enable some of the most effective elements of the 2-day module to still be part of the programme, but over just the 1 day instead.

Summary of events held

From August 2009 to July 2010, the following events were delivered by Making Research Count (York):

Regional Conferences

- *Adult Social Care Transformation*
- *Putting Young People at the Centre*

Research briefing seminars

- *Targeted Family Support*, James Blewett, King's College London
- *Every Child Matters*, Nick Frost, Leeds Metropolitan University
- *Children and Families Experiencing Domestic Violence*, Nicky Stanley, University of Central Lancashire
- *Special Guardianship*, Jo Dixon, University of York
- *Extra Care Housing and Dementia*, Rachael Dutton, Housing 21 and Dementia Voice
- *Offender Health and Social Care*, Iestyn Williams, University of Birmingham

- *The Personalisation of Adult Social Care*, Martin Stevens, King's College London
- *What's in a Name?*, Hugh McLaughlin, University of Salford
- *Pathways to Permanence*, Nina Biehal, University of York, and Julie Selwyn, University of Bristol
- *Implementing the Laming Recommendations*, Lisa Holmes and Emily Munro, Loughborough University
- *Personalised Transition*, Alison Cowen and Pippa Murray, Centre for Welfare Reform in association with ibk initiatives

Yorkshire & Humberside Research Governance Framework Group

Making Research Count (York) is hosts and chairs the regional Research Governance Framework group in Yorkshire and Humberside. The purpose of the group is to provide a forum for regional research governance leads from local authorities to come together and discuss developments and common concerns, and share good practice. Three meetings were held in 2009-10, and these are set to continue.

Attendance and evaluation

During the year, a total of 440 people registered to attend events, comprising 354 from subscribing agencies, with a further 86 registrations from non-subscribing organisations which pay to attend. These paid-for places generated just over £6,000 in income. The overall attendance rate was 82%. Non-attendance at events was up slightly on last year, and measures have been put in place with subscribing agencies which should help in addressing this trend.

Evaluation forms are provided at all events, and a total of 236 were completed during 2009-10, representing a 54% response rate. Evaluation forms cover a number of items, a summary of the main findings shows that, across research briefing seminars:

- 90% reported that they thought the University's pre-event administration was either excellent or very good
- The content of the presentations was rated as excellent or very good by 82% of respondents; a further 16% rating content as 'average'
- 78% of delegates felt that the structure of events was either excellent or very good, with the remainder reporting it as 'average'

Finances

Making Research Count (York) finished the financial year with a small surplus, after allowing for all income (subscriptions and paying places) and all expenditure (salaries, event costs, speakers' expenses, overheads, etc).

Income generated by paid-for places made a significant contribution towards paying speaker fees and using external venues to address the issue of car parking.

4. PLANS FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR

Context for the year

In the current climate of public service cuts and the associated increased pressure on practitioners' time and resources, Making Research Count is very aware that it must remain focused on valuable and practical research dissemination.

Making Research Count (York) will be implementing an 'Associate' scheme in late 2010, which is designed to add quality and flexibility to the programme. Associates will have a substantial background in social work and social care, either from an academic and/or practitioner background, and might be freelance, part-time employed or (semi)retired. The role of Associate is non-contractual, with a small fee being paid in return for chairing and facilitating events. The funding required to implement the Associate scheme will be generated through a reduction in the hours of the Regional Co-ordinator who will, as a result of the scheme, not be required to be in attendance at as many events.

Programme delivery

At the time of producing this annual report, there are a number of events already planned for the 2010-11 programme, focusing on:

- Computer assisted interviewing solutions for vulnerable adults
- Person-centred care for people with dementia
- Residential care home workforce development
- Youth and Young Adult Offending
- Fabricated and Induced illness, and safeguarding issues for children
- End of Life Care
- Pre-birth assessment/early intervention
- Models of service delivery to support continuity of care for people with long-term neurological conditions

5. CONCLUSIONS

Making Research Count can report a successful year, in delivery, development and financial terms. In the current financial climate, we are delighted that all of our existing subscribers have chosen to renew their membership and look forward to another successful year.

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