

RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



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Mental and
Physical Multimorbidity

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Who was involved?

THANK YOU This project would not have been possible without the help of a large number of people. We are grateful to everyone who filled in the surveys and to all our supporters who spread the word and helped us get such good cross-sector engagement. Thank you to the people who attended the workshop.

Finally, a huge shout out to the members of the steering group who made sure we completed this project and learned a lot from each other along the way. We are very excited to continue this work collaboratively.

This project was funded by the National Institute of Health Research Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) Yorkshire and Humber.

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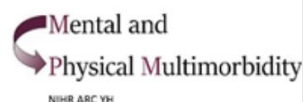
Why did we do this work

Our aim is to address complexities arising from coexisting mental and physical health problems, identified as priorities in the NHS Long Term Plan (2019). This includes severe mental illness where life expectancy is reduced by around 20 years (the SMI 'Mortality gap'), and common mental disorders, where physical illnesses like diabetes and COPD are associated with anxiety and depression, leading to increased hospital admission and greater mortality.

Over the last two years we have been exploring the most important research questions for people with both physical and mental health issues (with a focus on severe mental ill health). With the aim of giving a voice to those living with both physical and mental health issues, their families and the health and social care professionals who support them in deciding the most important questions to be answered.



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HOW DID WE GET TO THE TOP 10

To identify the Top 10 most pressing, unanswered questions about people living with physical and mental illness, we convened a steering group. Using some guidance from the James Lind Alliance, together we went through an inclusive and thorough priority-setting process.

STEP 1. AUGUST 2020

We set up our Steering Group and met in August 2020 to agree the scope of the work of:

Promoting the health of people with both mental and physical health issues and improving treatment, services and support (including self-management).



STEP 2. NOVEMBER 2020

The first online survey was conducted which asked people to suggest questions or topics which, if examined by research, would make a real difference to the lives of people with both mental and physical health issues.

Over 100 people responded and suggested more than 500 topics and questions which we used to create a long list of 54 questions.



STEP 3. JUNE 2021

We conducted the second online survey which asked people to pick the 20 questions most important to them from a list 54 questions; again over 100 people responded.



STEP 4. NOVEMBER 2021

We hosted a workshop via zoom and had attendees with lived experience, carers and health care professionals to discuss the top 20 of the second survey.



STEP 4. THE NEXT STEPS

We aim to start the work on these priorities continuing with a collaborative approach.

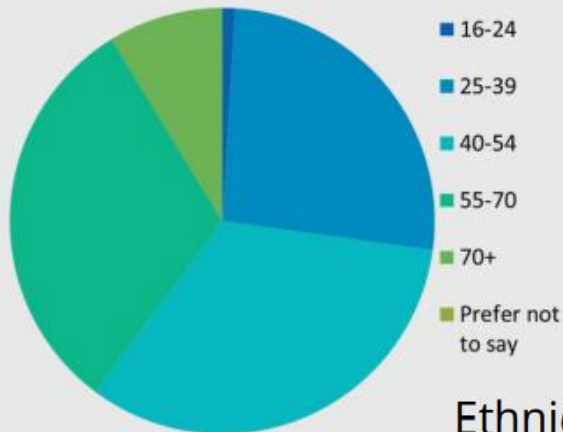


How did we get to the top 10

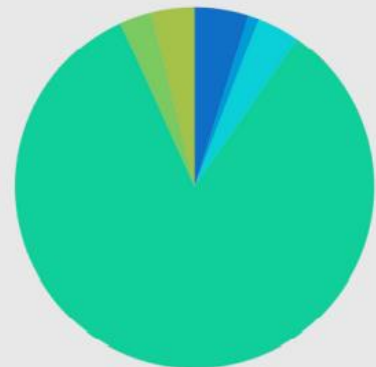
Gathering your questions - The First Survey

Respondents described themselves as:

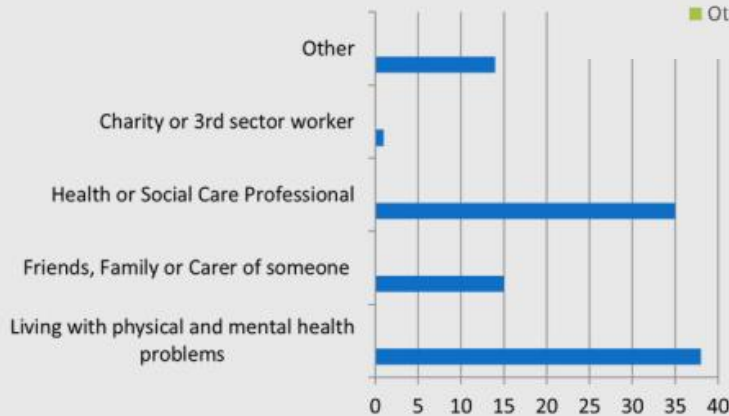
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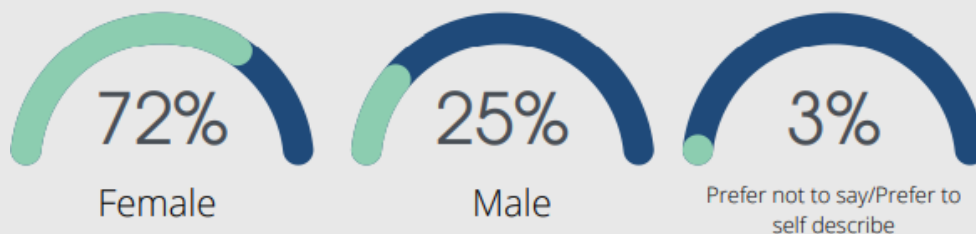
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Occupation/identifies as:



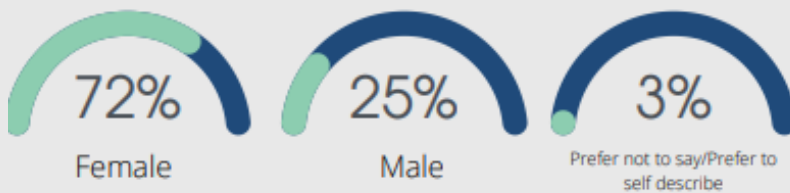
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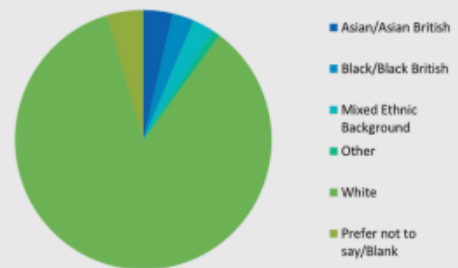
How did we get to the top 10

Gathering your questions -
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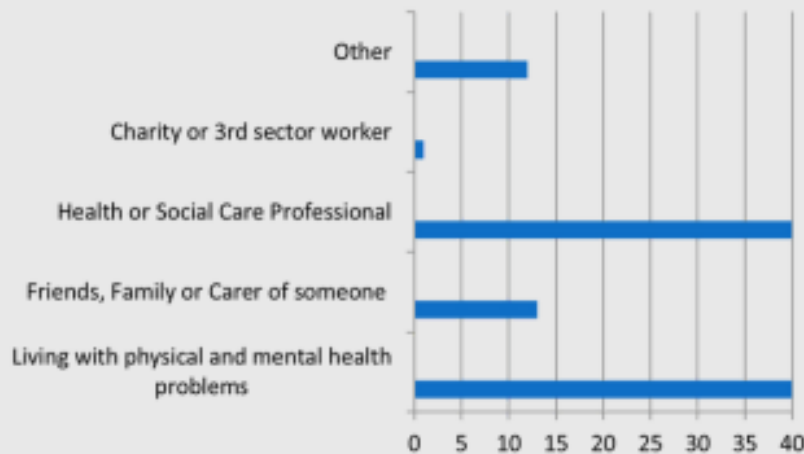
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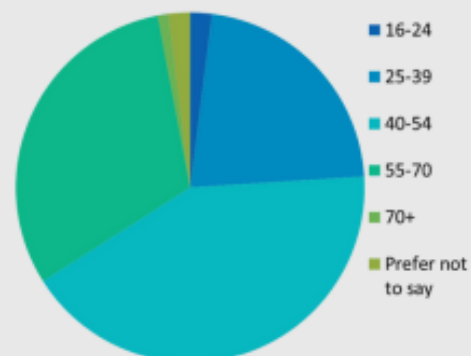
Ethnicity:



Occupation/identifies as:



Age:



The Top 10

Coordination of Care and Access to Services

1. Some people are living with mental health issues and long-term physical health conditions. How can:
 - Mental and physical health services best work together to coordinate their care and support?
 - The challenges of navigating several different health services e.g. dealing with multiple appointments and information requests, be reduced or made easier?
 - Their conditions be cared for and treated together rather than each one being addressed separately?
2. How can people with mental and physical health issues, including people in vulnerable groups (e.g. those who are homeless, those in disadvantaged communities), be supported to look after their mental and physical health when they face high levels of deprivation and poor access to services?
3. Would specialist services for people living with severe mental health ill health and long-term physical health conditions make a difference to their overall health? What can we learn from current 'best practice' about how to organise and deliver specialist services?

Understanding the Link Between Mental and Physical Health

4. How can a better understanding of mental health issues be created in physical health services and a better understanding of physical health problems be created in mental health services?
5. How can conversations between GP's and people living with mental health issues (including annual Health Checks) be improved when discussing their physical health?
6. How can patients and their friends or family carers be supported in their understanding of how mental health issues can impact physical health issues and how physical health issues can impact mental health issues?
7. Can effective pain management improve peoples' mental health?

The Top 10

Managing Medication

8. The side effects of medications and the interaction between medications are a major concern for people living with mental health issues and long-term physical health conditions.

How can:

- **Side effects linked to mental health medication (e.g. weight gain, dry mouth/dental problems) be reduce or avoided?**
- **Over-prescribing of medications and prescribing medications that react negatively with one another be reduced or eliminated?**

Health Promotion

9. Can providing healthy meals (e.g. meals on wheels) and/or supporting people to cook healthy meals (e.g. cooking coaching; access to low cost cooking equipment) help people with severe mental illness manage their weight and related physical health conditions (e.g. diabetes) in the long term?

10. People living with mental and physical health issues often find it hard to keep physically active. How can we:

- **Better understand the barriers to people using schemes to help with physical health issues (e.g. leisure cards, social prescribing, gym prescriptions)?**
- **Identify the most effective and ongoing ways to support people to be more active (e.g. support from a health and wellbeing coach, peer support and group sessions, making use of green spaces)?**

Your other priorities

How can patients and their friends or family carers be supported in their understanding of how mental health issues can impact physical health issues and how physical health issues can impact mental health issues?

How can self-management support for long term physical health conditions be made more accessible to people living with mental health issues?

What are the major barriers for people with mental health issues when accessing physical health services and how can these be overcome?

How can people be supported to look after their mental and physical health when they face high levels of deprivation and poor access to services?



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