



Making Research Count

ANNUAL REPORT 2011-12

1. INTRODUCTION

Making Research Count is a national research dissemination initiative, run regionally across the country by 12 universities. This is the 2011-12 annual report for the Making Research Count programme run by the University of York. The other 11 universities involved in Making Research Count are Bedfordshire, Brighton, Central Lancashire, East Anglia, Keele, King's College London, Northumbria (in partnership with Teesside), Salford, University of the West of England, 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 7 local authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber – these being East Riding, Hull, Leeds, North East Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Wakefield and York. All 7 are subscribers for both the Adults and Children & Families programme streams.

2. NATIONAL UPDATE

- Last year's annual report gave an account of the impact on the national Making Research Count programme of the financial pressures facing the public sector. This situation has now stabilised and, during 2011-12, all existing Making Research Count programmes have continued to run successfully. Furthermore, one programme which had been suspended has now resumed, and it is particularly pleasing to report that a new Making Research Count hub has been established at the University of West England in Bristol.
- 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 within the 11 universities of the Making Research Count network. 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 12 universities. These are accessible via any of the universities websites. The team at the University of York has taken over the collation and distribution of Research News, with assistance from the University of East Anglia.

3. THE 2011-12 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, events with a joint focus on both adults and children's services, and larger seminars.

In March 2012, a meeting was held with all subscribing agency key contacts to review the programme and agree plans to move forward. Following this meeting, the annual invoicing of members took place for

subscriptions to the forthcoming year's programme. Having in the previous year lost the subscriptions of two adult social care agencies and one children and families members, it can now be reported that one of the adult social care agencies has since reinstated its membership.

A summary of the main items discussed at the March meeting includes:

- Attendance rates at events remained constant during 2011-12 despite the resource pressures faced by local authorities. There is, however, a general trend that delegate numbers at adult services events are lower than those at children and families events. This may represent a number of factors, but is something which the Making Research Count team at York has now begun to investigate with a view to increasing the numbers from adults services.
- The potential for delivering some events by way of podcast was agreed to be something worth exploring as a means for maintaining the quantity of events in an environment of scarce resources. Since the March meeting, the idea of an online community of practice/interest has also been suggested. Consideration of both of these facilities is now underway.
- For the 2012-13 programme and beyond, the event feedback form has been reviewed and revised in order to collect information regarding post-event dissemination by delegates. A new procedure has also been agreed to ensure that workforce development/training managers are kept informed about the opportunities for dissemination following Making Research Count events.
- Topics for future events were proposed and, in addition to some wider consultation, the 2012 -13 programme is being put together to directly reflect the current areas of interest and organisational priorities of Making Research Count (York)'s members. More information on these topic areas can be found in section 4 below.

Events held

From August 2011 to July 2012, the following events were delivered by Making Research Count (York):

Larger seminars

- *Tackling Homelessness and Exclusion*, Peter Dwyer (Salford) and Michelle Cornes (King's College, London)
- *Making Children's Rights Matter*, Mike Stein (York) and Nick Frost (Leeds Met)
- *Getting it Right when it's Complex*, Caroline Glendinning with Jenni Brooks and Kate Gridley (York)
- *Choosing the Right Path (young people with autism)*, Bryony Beresford (York) and Kate Williams (Ambitious about Autism)
- *Attachment Theory*, David Howe (University of East Anglia)

Research briefings

- *Judgements or Assumptions*, Duncan Helm (Stirling)
- *Making Decisions when you have Dementia*, Geraldine Boyle (Bradford)
- *When is it Safe for Maltreated Children to go Home?*, Jim Wade (York)
- *Still Running (young runaways)*, Gwyther Rees (Children's Society)
- *Safeguarding Adults: Listening and Learning*, Jill Manthorpe (King's College, London) and Caroline White (Hull)
- *Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care*, Nina Biehal (York)
- *Choice and Change*, Kate Baxter and Parvaneh Rabiee (York)

Additional event

In November 2011, the conference , 'A Child-Centred System' was held. This event was jointly hosted by Making Research Count and BASPCAN.

Attendance and evaluation

During the year, a total of 554 people registered to attend events, representing an increase of 13.5% on the previous year. Reversing the trend of 2010-11, income generated from paid for places (either additional member places or non-member organisations) increased, coming in at around £6,500 for the year. Whilst impressive, it is fair to record that the surge in additional income was largely as a result of the re-run of David Howe's 'Attachment Theory' seminar and from the larger conference jointly hosted

with BASPCAN. Nonetheless, in a climate of increased costs against depleted resources, this additional income helped us to sustain the delivery of a healthy and varied programme of events.

Overall attendance at events was 92%, again an increase on the previous year's rate of 90%.

Evaluation forms are provided at all events, and a total of 408 were completed during 2011-12, representing a 74% response rate. Evaluation forms cover a number of items, a summary of the main findings shows that, across research briefing seminars:

- The content and quality of research presentations was rated as excellent or very good by 86% of respondents (compared with 90% in 2010-11; and, 82% in 2009-10);
- 94% reported that they thought the University's pre-event administration was either excellent or very good (97% in 2010-11, 90% in 2009-10);
- Satisfaction with the pre-event processes within member organisations was reported as either excellent or very good by 88% of delegates.

The following is a selection of quotes from delegates attending events:

"Really useful conference, a lot of relevant information that can improve current practice. Lots of insight, well done"

"Important even in financial cutbacks to reflect on theory and practice"

"Excellent venue with good transport links. Excellent range of diverse experiences within the room. Excellent contextual start to the event by Chair, thank you, this has been a very informative event and will be reflecting on my practice as a result"

"Excellent presentation, bridging the gap between academia and practice. Wonderful speaker, inspirational"

"Brilliant venue, easy to get to, lovely helpful staff, very interesting and valuable day"

"Very informative and applicable to my practice and improving outcomes for the individuals I work with, thank you"

Important to be aware of research findings to help improve my practice, also to be able to share experiences/best practice with other professionals"

Finances

Making Research Count (York) finished the financial year with a surplus of around £2,000, after allowing for all income (subscriptions and paying places) and all expenditure (salaries, event costs, speakers' expenses, overheads, etc). Expenditure in 2011-12 on 'speakers fees' increased owing to the use of 'external' Chairs and facilitators which has become a feature of the events programme since the Regional Coordinator's hours were reduced. Conversely, the amount spent on paying presenters a fee has reduced significantly, largely as a result of more effective negotiation with academic researchers on the benefits to them of working with Making Research Count.

4. PLANS FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR

Context for the year

The financial environment remains a challenge for the University and its Making Research Count members. However, the programme continues to be subscribed to, and individual events are as popular with delegates as ever. Making Research Count, both at York and nationally, continues to deliver a successful yet affordable programme of events.

Programme delivery

At the time of producing this annual report, there are a number of events already planned for the 2012-13 programme, which reflect directly the consultation with members in March 2012, and which focus on:

- Discourse Analysis

- Independent Mental Health Advocates
- Advocacy for Disabled Children and Young People
- Teenage Parenthood
- Self-neglect and Adult Safeguarding
- Personalisation and Carers; Managed Personal Budgets.

In addition, the following topics have been identified, and approaches will be made to academics and researchers in terms of planning for the remainder of the coming year's programme:

- Health and Social Care Integration
- Early intervention for 'troubled families'
- Critical thinking for social workers
- Adolescent mental health
- Online safety for children and young people
- Thresholds and expectations in the transition to adults services.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Making Research Count can report a successful year in delivery, development and financial terms. It is disappointing that we have lost a small number of longstanding members, but we remain both financially viable and committed to the delivery of a lively and successful programme for the coming year.

This is also the time to announce that Professor Ian Shaw has stepped down from his academic lead role with Making Research Count (York). We would like to thank Ian for all of his help and support, and wish him well for the future. It is our pleasure, however, to announce that a new member of staff at the University of York will be taking over the lead academic role for the programme. Martin Webber, Reader in Social Work, joined the Department of Social Policy and Social Work (University of York) in September 2012. He is a registered social worker who has worked with both adults with a learning disability and adults with mental health problems. His research focuses on the development and evaluation of social interventions which aim to improve the well-being and social participation of vulnerable adults. Martin is particularly interested in developing the evidence base for social work practice and engaging practitioners in research of relevance to them. We are delighted to welcome Martin on board!

Stephanie Lacey
Regional Co-ordinator
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