

Funded PhD Opportunity in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Queen's University Belfast 2020-21

The School of Nursing and Midwifery, in collaboration with the Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation at Queen's University Belfast is delighted to announce an opportunity to apply for a fully funded PhD Studentship.

Proposal Document for DfE scholarship commencing January 2021

Title: Referral routes to community support; exploring the impact of social prescribing

Supervision Team: Dr Karen Galway, QUB (Primary Supervisor), Dr Liam O'Hare, QUB (Second), Dr Marcello Bertotti, UEL (Third, External)

Background

Community based and non-medical approaches to health and wellbeing are gaining increased attention. For example, the 2019 NHS ten-year plan pledges that 900,000 people will be referred to social prescribing by 2023/24, as a means to reduce pressure on primary and secondary health care services. Emerging evidence suggests that social prescribing can result in reduced healthcare usage and improved empowerment of individuals with long-term conditions including mental health challenges. However there is a lack of robust evidence available to explain the mechanisms by which social prescribing to community led organisations can contribute to improved health and wellbeing.

Aim

As part of a wider NIHR funded study, the PhD fellowship will focus specifically on the referral mechanisms involved in connecting people to community based support. This will involve classifying and examining social prescribing approaches to supporting health and wellbeing via Community Led Organisations (CLOs).

Method

It is anticipated that approximately half of the CLOs taking part in the study will be connected to a social prescribing hub or administration system. The PhD fellowship project will compare those who have been referred through social prescribing, to those who have been referred through other means. This will involve three stages; initially a taxonomy of referral routes to CLO support will be created to represent referral activities across four sites in the UK, secondly those participants who were referred via social prescribing will be interviewed to explore perceptions and experiences of co-creating a prescription with a link worker, as part of the social prescription referral route or journey to support. Finally the health and economic outcomes of individuals will be compared by features of the referral route taxonomy.

Anticipated contribution

The findings will enhance our knowledge of the range of referral processes and how they relate and compare to primary care help-seeking described as social prescribing. In-depth analysis of the

referral systems and the contribution of a link worker will be directly relevant to policy makers developing social prescribing systems both nationally and internationally.

For further information please contact Dr Karen Galway k.galway@qub.ac.uk
