

## 1. Recruitment and Retention in Rural Health and Care - University of Birmingham

Research by Anne Green and George Bramley at the University of Birmingham is underway into exploring new routes and opportunities for tackling recruitment and retention in health and care in rural areas. This research is taking the form of a rapid review into the support available to aid recruitment and retention in the health and social care workforce in rural areas. A current area of focus is the volunteer workforce "Healthforce".

## 2. Rural Proofing for Health Toolkit - Rural England

Funding is in place for updating the Rural Proofing for Health Toolkit. Rural England CIC will lead on the research and drafting of the new *Rural Proofing for Health Toolkit* which was initially developed by the Institute for Rural Health under commission from Defra in 2012.

So far, six diverse Shire counties are being used as examples of rural areas, three of which have Integrated Care Services, and three of which have STPs. The Toolkit is being structured around six main themes: main hospitals; primary/community care; mental health services; prevention and public health; social care services; and workforce. Other themes are being dealt with in a cross-cutting manner, so appear within the six main themes e.g. accessibility/transport, digital, patient/public involvement, role of the voluntary/community sector.

The project is progressing well, however there have been some delays due to COVID-19 related staffing pressures. The first full draft of the core Toolkit material has been completed and is out with the project Reference Group for comment. First drafts of around half of the proposed case studies have been written and it is anticipated that the Toolkit will be ready for a launch in autumn 2020.

## 3. Rural Mental Health – NCRHC and Debbie Freake, Northumbria Healthcare Trust

A Zoom meeting of interested bodies with a link to rural mental health was chaired by the NCRHC in February 2020 in order to discuss the possibility of funding/undertaking a piece of research into rural mental health issues. The outcome of this has been that it has been that Debbie Freake has agreed to take the lead on a literature review to help to map out the information currently available on the subject and to identify gaps in information.

A separate piece of research has been undertaken to review policy and other public documents which relate to rural mental health issues. A list of these documents and the links to them is below:

- **Health inequalities in rural and coastal areas: How we age is strongly influenced by our environment, including where we live. (2019)**  
<https://publichealthengland.exposure.co/health-inequalities-in-rural-and-coastal-areas>

- **An evidence summary of health inequalities in older populations in coastal and rural areas (2019)**  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/824723/Health Inequalities in Ageing in Rural and Coastal Areas-Full report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/824723/Health_Inequalities_in_Ageing_in_Rural_and_Coastal_Areas-Full_report.pdf)
- **Place-based approaches for reducing health inequalities: main report (2019)**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-inequalities-place-based-approaches-to-reduce-inequalities/place-based-approaches-for-reducing-health-inequalities-main-report>
- **Statistical Digest of Rural England (2019)**  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/854562/12 Statistical Digest of Rural England 2019 December edition.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/854562/12_Statistical_Digest_of_Rural_England_2019_December_edition.pdf)
- **Annual Population Survey Population Wellbeing (2019)**  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818199/Wellbeing July 2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818199/Wellbeing_July_2019.pdf)
- **Rural health Care: A rapid review of the impact of rurality on the costs of delivering health care (2019)** <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/files/2019-01/rural-health-care-report-web3.pdf>
- **Mental Wellbeing, Social Isolation and Loneliness in Rural Scotland Key Messages (2019)**  
<https://vhscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Key-Messages-Mental-Wellbeing-in-Rural-Scotland.pdf>
- **Supporting farming communities at times of uncertainty: An action framework to support the mental health and well-being of farmers and their families (2019) (with Public Health Wales)** <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/supporting-farming-communities-times-uncertainty>
- **Rural Wellbeing Service Evaluation Report March 2019**  
<https://www.northantsacre.org.uk/sites/acre.1pcswbdesign.co.uk/files/Capitale%20Rural%20Wellbeing%20Service%20Evaluation%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>
- **Health and Wellbeing Research Report (2019)** <http://roseregeneration.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/WCF-Health-and-Wellbeing-Research-Report-FINAL-April.pdf>.
- **Rural Health and Care Services in Wales (2018)** <https://www.nhsconfed.org/-/media/Confederation/Files/Wales-Confed/Rural-Health-and-Care-Services-in-Wales.pdf>
- **An Evaluation of the Standing Together Project (2018)**  
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/evaluation-standing-together-project>
- **Health and wellbeing in rural areas – Public Health England/Local Government Association (2017)**  
[https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/1.39 Health%20in%20rural%20areas WEB.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/1.39_Health%20in%20rural%20areas_WEB.pdf)
- **Mental Health in Wales: Fundamental Facts 2016**  
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/FF16%20Wales.pdf>
- **Rural Health Plan: Improving integrated service delivery across Wales (2009)**  
<http://www.gpone.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1000/Rural%20Health%20Plan%20English%20PRINT.pdf>
- **National Centre for Rural Mental Health website** <https://www.ruralwellbeing.org/>

NCRHC Funded Action Research Projects:

A number of action research projects are currently underway with partner organisations.

## **Research Overview - University of Lincoln**

Liz Price from the University of Lincoln is responsible for collating and evaluating the findings of the University of Birmingham's research and that of the Action Research projects funded by NRCHC. She will then summarise the key learning that has come out of the research and produce a briefing paper.

### **1. Lincolnshire Co-operative Community Pharmacy Project with LIVES**

Lincolnshire Integrated Voluntary Emergency Service (LIVES) and Lincolnshire Co-operative have been collaborating on piece of work to scope out the potential to broaden the co-operative's community pharmacy service base by taking advantage of their accessibility and the existing skill base of their staff in order to provide a wider range of support to patients. This project aimed to:

- Improve access to meeting urgent needs and continuing care
- Reduce demand on local GP services
- Reduce demand and journey times to A&E services
- Enhance and expand the healthy lifestyle and prevention messages
- Signpost to improve the total health resource through public, private, voluntary and community resources

This is was done through work between LIVES and a small number of Co-op community pharmacies through supporting their skills around:

- Basic life support training and defibrillator use
- Wound care assessment and basic care
- Respiratory illness
- Mental Health First Aid
- Palliative Care

Since this research began, the new contractual framework for community pharmacy has had an impact, as there is now a national Community Pharmacy Consultation Service (CPCS) which is operated via 111. This service directly refers those calling 111 with a medicines issue or with a "minor illness" to a community pharmacy.

### **2. Recruitment and Retention of Staff in Rural Dispensing Practices - University of Exeter**

Funding has been approved for a piece of research into the Recruitment and retention of staff in rural dispensing practice. This research is being led by Chris Clark General Practitioner and Clinical Senior Lecturer, University of Exeter, College of Medicine and Health (ECMH).

This research is focussing on trying to understand the facilitators of, and barriers to, taking up and/or remaining in rural dispensing primary care employment. Its secondary aim is to explore the value placed on dispensing from the perspectives of the multidisciplinary healthcare team.

A brief literature review looking at the barriers and facilitators to recruiting staff into rural dispensing GP practices had been carried out and a topic guide prepared for interviews with current and recent dispensing practice staff (at all levels) to obtain their views about the challenges of recruiting and retaining practice staff.

### **3. Alternative Route into Medicine - Wye Valley NHS Trust in collaboration with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire primary care training hub**

Funding has been approved for a piece of research into alternative ways of training staff, for example using the Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR) pathway by which doctors who are not in an approved training programme can demonstrate their knowledge, skills and experience are equivalent to that of the relevant Certificate of Completion of training (CCT) in order to qualify as GPs and consultants. This research will also review and consider other pathways to qualification, such as those used by international training schemes, and explore if there are new pools of potential candidates that could be utilised.

The concept of using the Certificate of Eligibility for General Practitioner Registration (CEGPR) as an alternative route to GP registration has been explored and a paper to summarise the Certificate of Eligibility for General Practitioner Registration (CEGPR) route to becoming a GP, what competencies are required to become a GP, and case studies outlining different situations where the CEGPR could be used.

## Members' Research Interests

Between August and December 2019, a review into the research interests of NCRHC members was conducted with members which had indicated an interest in research on their membership engagement forms.

The responses of this review were collated into a matrix to identify common themes and shared topics of interest. These were divided into "Care related" themes of interest and "Service Delivery" themes of interest. We would now like to expand this review to involve all members, especially those who have recently joined us. You will be sent an email containing a link to an online survey which will ask you to update us on the general interests and research interests of your organisation along the themes below, as well as asking for any other themes of interest that your organisation might have. Our aim is to set up an online forum for each theme, to which members will be invited to join according to their interests. We hope that in this way we will be able to facilitate communication, networking and information sharing between those of you who may be involved in similar topics.

## Sharing Research and Findings

If your organisation is involved in any research activities or projects that it would like to showcase to other members, or if you have any research findings that you would like to promote, the NCRHC would be pleased to hear from you, as we hope to include an ongoing feature of this in future editions of Casebook. Please email any submissions to [kay.purle@bishopp.ac.uk](mailto:kay.purle@bishopp.ac.uk).

## Research Project Example



### **Measuring the Social Impact of Farmer Support Networks - Bishop Grosseteste University in conjunction with Rose Regeneration**

The NCRHC is currently supporting a research project which is investigating the impact of Farmer Support Networks on the health and wellbeing of farmers and land managers with engagement from 8 Farmer Support Networks from around England. This research is led by Bishop Grosseteste University and Rose Regeneration and is funded by Defra's Future Farming Resilience Fund. This piece of research will follow on from the recommendations made by the Rose Regeneration, the Worshipful Company of Farmers and University of Lincoln reports: "Putting the Spotlight on Farming Communities" (2013) <http://www.roseregeneration.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/PuttingTheSpotlightOnFarmingCommunities.pdf>; and "Health and Wellbeing Research Report" (2019) <http://roseregeneration.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/WCF-Health-and-Wellbeing-Research-Report-FINAL-April.pdf>. See here for more information <https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/bishop-grosseteste-university-to-embark-on-farmer-support-project/>.

If your organisation would like to share any details of its research projects or findings with other NCRHC members, or has any ideas for research projects and bids that the NCRHC may be interested in getting involved with, please email the details to [kay.purle@bishopg.ac.uk](mailto:kay.purle@bishopg.ac.uk)