

The Big Question Research Challenge

Priorities from Commissioners, Parents
and Carers, and Young People



Agenda

1 Background

2 The Process

3 Findings and Key Themes

4 Research Challenge Priorities

Background

- The literature doesn't hold all the answers
- We set out to speak to those people on the ground interacting with research in practice
- We planned to take forward their thoughts, experiences, and contributions in this area to establish priorities for this funding call

The Process

- **Commissioners**
 - One-to-one interviews and Online Survey
- **Young People**
 - Virtual priority setting workshop on Zoom - 15th September
- **Parents and Carers**
 - Virtual priority setting workshop on Zoom - 13th September

Priority Setting with Commissioners

One-to-one interviews

- 10 Participants

Online survey

- 11 Participants

Disciplines

- Largely Clinical Commissioning Groups, or Clinical Service Providers
- Also Multi-Academy Trusts, and Mental Health Support Teams
- Also Local Authorities, Training Providers, Charities and Public Health England



Questions: Commissioners

1. What does 'evidence-based' mean to you?
2. What do you think is stopping the implementation of 'evidence-based' practice relating to children and young people's mental health?
3. What do you think is facilitating the implementation of 'evidence-based' practice relating to children and young people's mental health?
4. Is there something specific about the sector you work in, that might be helpful or unhelpful, when implementing evidence-based practice?

Findings: Commissioners

- Limits to resource, funding and time
- Call for improved accessibility and communication of research and evidence

"I often observe a culture in services whereby doing something different i.e. a new evidence-based intervention, often requires this to be a new or additional offer [...] I'm unsure if this is cultural ambivalence to change, capability to transform, or lack of capacity to stop, reflect, identify opportunities for new approaches, and implement these."

"The evidence base is singing to clinicians and academics"

Findings: Commissioners

- Feeling of disconnection between the evidence base, and the practical reality of challenges on the ground

"I feel there is still a real disconnect between research (where the evidence base comes from) and wider practice. I also think there is then a gap in how the services that we are commissioning (not only via NHS trusts but wider services from the vol sector) can help contribute to the evidence base and how they show outcomes."

Findings: Commissioners

- Need for a broader, more inclusive definition of "evidence-based"
- Need for greater co-production of research with young people, and commissioners

"Anything that's proven to be effective in bringing about change/improvement in outcomes should be seen as evidence based, and so called 'softer' models can be more effective in engaging young people than traditional evidence-based models or therapeutic interventions. "



Priority Setting with Parents

- 13 attendees
- All parents and carers of a child with lived experience of mental ill-health
- Many worked as advocates, parent advisors, or had jobs within the mental health system



Questions: Parents and Carers

1. How important do you think research is in improving services?
2. Where have you seen research being used effectively in your children's care?
3. What do you think are some of the barriers and facilitators for putting research into practice?

Findings: Parents and Carers

- Recognition of the lack of capacity, and resources available to achieve change
- Lack of openness to innovation

"I think practitioners are terribly overworked. And it's hard for them to take time and learn new things. If it's not really easy to implement, it could be, I think it's quite challenging for them."

"They haven't got the time to do something different because they're comfortable doing this and, it enables them to do that."

Findings: Parents and Carers

- Importance of communication, and trust

"And I felt as a parent, even as quite a uhm, an aware parent and a, you know a parent that has a good understanding and vocabulary of kind of mental health and mental health issues, I was very much held at arm's length and, actually there was a real, kind of a real resistance actually to me asking questions or wanting to to get more involved and have more of an understanding."

"So, parents are kind of wanting to know. You know that where, what, what you know? Why are we being given this advice, what are the outcomes that we should be expecting?"

Findings: Parents and Carers

- Importance of co-production of services, and research with parents, carers and young people
- Individuality of care and need



"But it's the carers who know, and it's the parents who have taken on the task of really spreading the word about good research"

"I don't think it can be evidence based if they're not making it bespoke."

Priority Setting with Young People

- 10 attendees
- All aged between 16 and 24
- Many had a experience of participating in research, or had roles within participation groups, service user involvement groups, or lived experience advisory panels



Questions: Young People

1. How important do you think research is in improving services?
2. Where have you seen research being used effectively in your care?
3. What do you think are some of the barriers and facilitators for putting research into practice?

Findings: Young People

- Recognition of the lack of capacity, resources but also willingness to change
- Clear need to improve communication and accessibility of research for young people

"And therefore miscommunication comes into fact like comes into as a factor. Uh, young people don't really know much about research or where to access it, and that can be also very big issue, so they're left in the dark more so than the practitioner."

"Another thing could be getting people to accept the research, even because some people can be very set in their ways and they think, oh, this is what I've been told this is what I've known my entire life, so this is what it is."

Findings: Young People

- Need for openness to innovation and global collaboration

"I do feel like it would be a wasted opportunity for us to not engage in mental health research from a global context"

"Yeah, I suppose even if a research says something, it might not always be right in 100% of every case. That is like quite important to understand, so I guess sometimes research can't be put into practice in that way. And for good reason I guess."

Findings: Young People

- Importance of co-production, youth voice, and feeling heard

"I mean without research you can't bend or shape your practice to benefit anyone at all."

"I guess more volunteers like for example psychology and university students. If they can get more involved with CAMHS or the NHS, then that might take the strain off some of the mental health professionals a little bit."



Between-Group Similarities

- All groups felt that in order to be implemented, research needed to recognise, listen to, work with, and be adaptable to needs on the ground
- All groups recognised the importance of research to underpin practice, but felt that the traditional definition of "evidence-based" needed to be broadened
- All recognised capacity as barrier to implementing research in practice, but felt there were ways around this

The 4Cs



Communication



Co-production

Capacity



Change



Key Priorities for Research

We would like to fund research projects that address the questions of:

1. How can we enable decision makers to better

- Understand
- Use
- And allocate resources for

research and evidence in practice?

2. How can research evidence be co-adapted to meet local and specific needs in practice?

Thank you!



THE BIG QUESTION RESEARCH CHALLENGE