



ARC East of England Working with experts by experience to improve mental health outcomes

Improving the experiences of mental health hospital discharges

Approximately 50,000 people are discharged from mental health hospitals every year, often finding the experience overwhelming and distressing. Additionally, there is also a risk of becoming unwell again, with approximately 13% being re-admitted to the hospital. Sarah Rae (Co-Chief Investigator), who has had two long-stay inpatient admissions, found the

experience of being discharged intensely distressing due to a lack of preparation and support for re-entering the community.

What is the aim of the project?

The MINDS study aims to develop an understanding of the complexity surrounding discharge to improve experiences and outcomes relating to

discharge from mental health hospitals.

What are we doing?

There are three main parts to the MINDS study, including a realist literature review, observation of mental health wards, and interviews with people with lived experience of discharge and healthcare staff. In the second year, we have co-developed the Onwards Approach/Planner, which enables service users and staff to work together to support people from admission to moving on from the ward and make them feel psychologically prepared to leave the ward. The final part of the project will evaluate the Onward Approach.

How are we involving people?

This study has established a Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) that plays a crucial role in shaping the project. This group involves individuals with recent experience of being discharged from hospitals. In addition, two LEAG members serve on the Study Steering Committee and each work package is led by someone with lived experience.

What is NIHR ARC East of England?

The National Institute for Health and Care Research Applied Research Collaboration (NIHR ARC) East of England is one of the 15 NIHR ARCs. We collaborate with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust and the Universities of Cambridge, East Anglia, Hertfordshire and Essex, along with other NHS Trusts, Local Authorities, Integrated Care Systems, patient-led organisations, charities, and industry partners.

What is the impact so far?

The MINDS study has been co-designed to address the needs of all key stakeholders. By implementing the Onwards Approach, we aim to enhance hospital discharges for individuals, engage their supporters in the process, and ensure staff feel secure. Our research has identified complex needs and systems related to mental health hospital discharges that require attention. These insights will inform the refinement of the approach and supporting materials, as well as the development of policy and practice guidance for discharge planning.

What next?

We will develop a study to robustly test the Onwards Approach.

For more information about this project

Scan the QR code or contact the Co-Chief Investigator, Corinna Hackmann (corinna.hackmann@nsft.nhs.uk).



Get in contact with NIHR ARC East of England

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