



Community Navigator



**Expression of interest in joining Lived Experience Advisory Panel for a National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) funded research project:**

***Randomised controlled trial of the Community Navigator programme to reduce loneliness and depression for adults with treatment-resistant depression in secondary mental health services.***

We are looking for eight people to join a Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP) for an exciting new research study starting in September this year. These roles will suit people who:

- **Have lived experience of depression and loneliness, and have used mental health services**
- **Live in or near North London, Birmingham, York/North Yorkshire (the areas where the study is taking place)**

The role will involve attending advisory panel meetings every few months to help guide the study. There will also be opportunities to get involved in analysing interviews, training the staff delivering the programme, and writing up findings from the study. Below is more information about the study and the role of LEAP members. If you are interested, details of how to apply are provided at the end of this sheet.

The closing date for expressions of interest is Friday **30<sup>th</sup> July 2021.**

**What is the Community Navigator project about?**

In our previous research, service users, mental health staff and researchers worked together to develop the Community Navigator programme, which aims to reduce loneliness for people with depression who are using community mental health services.

The programme involves offering people ten meetings with a “Community Navigator” over a six-month period, to discuss people, places and activities which are important to them, and to develop and achieve goals for enhancing social connections and reducing loneliness.

There are also meet-ups for people in the programme to share experiences of local groups and resources, and strategies for reducing loneliness. Community Navigators bring a fresh approach which complements clinical care: they are recruited and trained to be experts in their local communities and in actively helping people participate in social groups and activities.

Our previous research established the programme and was welcomed by participants and the mental health teams taking part. It looks promising as a way to help with depression by reducing people’s loneliness.

This study has been funded to undertake a full trial in four areas of England to test the effectiveness of the Community Navigator programme, in a three-and-a-half year Randomised Controlled Trial study. This means 306 people will be allocated at random to either get support from a Community Navigator in addition to their usual community mental health team care, or to carry on receiving treatment as usual.

You can read more about the study and access the peer reviewed papers we wrote by looking at this webpage: <https://mcpin.org/community-navigator-study/>



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### **How can you get involved?**

We are putting together a **new Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP)** that will advise on and shape this research project. It will be chaired by a lived experience researcher from the McPin Foundation. We are looking to recruit:

- 2 people who live in or around York/North Yorkshire
- 2 people who live in Birmingham
- 4-5 people from London (we will seek to include both people with experience from the previous Community Navigators project and new members, and at least some who live in Barnet, Camden or Islington)

### **What lived experience is required?**

LEAP members will all have a lived experience of **past or current long-term depression** (it would be beneficial if you have had support for this provided by secondary mental health services), and **feelings of loneliness**.

There is also an emphasis on **understanding the local area** and the resources available within the community. We are looking for people who live in or near **York / North Yorkshire, Birmingham**, and our London sites of **Camden / Islington and Barnet**.

Members don't need to have been part of a research group or committee before, but previous experience of or involvement in research is welcome. You should be comfortable in meetings and working with people with different views to your own. You bring your **interest in research**, if not experience of being a research advisor.

In London, where the study was originally based, we are looking for some members of our previous Working Group to be involved. We require knowledge of Community Navigation research study and research processes. We have 4-5 places for people from London: some of these are likely to be filled by applicants from the previous group but not all will be - we also want new members to join the group.

### **What will a LEAP member do?**

The members will be asked to attend 12 meetings over three years. Each meeting will be up to three hours. In meetings, the LEAP group will contribute to planning the trial and how it is run (e.g. how best to recruit participants) and planning qualitative interview studies which will run alongside the trial.

Most of these meetings will be via the online video platform Zoom (with breaks), and a couple may be face-to-face (and Covid-safe) in London. There will likely be preparation work prior to meetings, including reading updates.

The first meeting will be in late September or early October 2021. There will also be opportunities for additional involvement outside of meetings. These will include:

- Supporting with recruitment and training of Community Navigators at our four research sites
- Helping to plan qualitative research studies
- Involvement in qualitative research data analysis sessions



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- Involvement in project dissemination - for example writing blogs and co-authoring peer review papers

### What's required of you?

- You must be aged 18+
- Have a stable internet connection or phone line to join Zoom meetings
- Have an email address or phone number so that you are contactable to schedule meetings
- Interest in research on loneliness and depression
- Some experience of qualitative research methods
- Some knowledge of, or willingness to learn about, Randomised Controlled Trial methodology
- Confidence speaking in meetings and working in a team (co-production)
- Confident using computers to attend Zoom meetings, receive meeting papers by email and edit documents using Microsoft Word
- Able to draw on personal experiences of depression, loneliness and, with support, use this knowledge in meetings and across the project to improve research

### What will be provided?

All activities for LEAP members will be offered as paid involvement rather than employment. It will be your choice whether to get involved in any activity, although we would like members to attend LEAP meetings wherever possible. All involvement in the project will be paid, including attendance at LEAP meetings and other tasks as described above. **You will be paid £20 per hour.**

We are planning for most meetings to take place online – however, if face-to-face meetings do occur and you are comfortable to attend, **then travel expenses will be provided.** We would like to have a few in-person meetings over the course of the study if possible!

### Why join our LEAP?

- You will meet other people around the country interested in research and changing mental health services
- You will be contributing to nationally funded scientific research, which will add to knowledge about how to support people with serious mental health conditions effectively
- You will hopefully benefit from the experience personally. We know the study will benefit enormously from working alongside people with experience of chronic depression and feelings of loneliness.

### I'm interested! Who do I contact?

If you are interested in this opportunity, please complete the "Expression of interest form" and email it to Tanya Mackay at [tanyamackay@mcpin.org](mailto:tanyamackay@mcpin.org) with the subject line 'Community Navigator LEAP Application'.