

# SCEPTRE NEWSLETTER

*Welcome* to the second edition of the SCEPTRE newsletter!

In this edition, we will focus on the design stage of the SCEPTRE support package. We will also reflect on 2020, and how we have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are excited to announce that we have been joined by five individuals with experience of admission to a smokefree mental health ward, who will form the core of our patient and public engagement panel. Their experience and input in the design stage of SCEPTRE have been invaluable and we look forward to working alongside them.

As a team, we were joined by Carla Vital - our new research administrator - in January. Carla joins us from the Department of Green Chemistry at York. Welcome, Carla!

## **SCEPTRE: REFLECTING ON 2020**

Just 43 days after launching the SCEPTRE programme the coronavirus pandemic meant England went into its first national lockdown. During March and April 2020 many research studies were forced to shut down to slow the spread of Covid-19, protect participants' from the virus, and free up NHS staff to care for people who caught the disease. All of these changes were hard on researchers, participants, and study sites.

SCEPTRE in a way was quite fortunate. It was not affected as other studies were and it was not paused by regulators or the NHS. Instead, we found solutions for how to develop and test the SCEPTRE intervention in a Covid-secure way.

The ability of all of the individuals working on SCEPTRE to rise to this unprecedented challenge - juggling working from home, re-deployment to support the NHS Covid-19 effort, home-schooling, illnesses, and of course reconfiguring a six-year programme of work has been impressive, to say the least.

## **A CHANGE OF PLAN**

In the original plan, SCEPTRE would have used surveys and interviews to find out how people were helped to change their smoking behaviours following a stay in a smokefree mental health ward. This information would then be brought together with the results of existing research and the views of mental health professionals to design an intervention with support options that we knew would be helpful.

With mental health care moving online and ward visits restricted, we needed to find ways to assess what people thought would help or hinder their attempts to change their smoking behaviour once they were home.

We chose, as an alternative, to review the existing published literature to pull together what other researchers had already found about people's perceptions of those sorts of interventions. And so the development phase of SCEPTRE began.

## **DESIGNING THE SCEPTRE INTERVENTION**

During the Spring and Summer of 2020, we undertook two reviews of the published literature. This allowed us to see what types of support were effective in supporting people with severe mental illnesses to change their smoking following a stay in a smokefree mental health hospital, and also allowed us to find out what participants and mental health professionals thought of the interventions and what things helped or hindered them in either receiving the support or delivering it.

We then met with members of the wider SCEPTRE team, including tobacco researchers, experts in behaviour change, mental health clinicians, and stop smoking specialists to design a package of support that is based on evidence of what we know works, and which can be easily fit with existing care pathways within the NHS.

The country came out of national lockdown and into local restrictions in the late summer of 2020 and with this, some research resumed within the NHS. We worked with our Management Team and Clinicians to find a way to consult with patients and the people who support them about their views on the SCEPTRE support package.

Seven current or former smokers with experience of a smokefree mental health admission, one family member, and 17 mental health professionals were interviewed via video call. Participants were from Sheffield Health and Social Care, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation, and Tees, Esk, and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trusts. We also consulted experts in tobacco policy to ensure our proposed support package aligned with national policy and practice.

## **INVOLVING PATIENTS AND THE PUBLIC**

In January 2021 we were excited to begin recruiting to the SCEPTRE patient and public engagement panel. Five individuals expressed an interest in joining the panel and they now form a core function in the SCEPTRE programme.

Dr Emily Shoesmith, Research Fellow on SCEPTRE leads the group and is supported by SCEPTRE Patient and Public Involvement co-applicants, brothers Simon and Phil Hough.



*"It's about  
maximising  
people's voices"*

Simon & Phil Hough (2020)