

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01AM: Wednesday 11 July 2018

NEWS RELEASE

Public invited to help shape a new national research programme on ethnic inequalities and severe mental illness in the UK

The first national online survey of its kind to give members of the public the opportunity to set the research priorities in the field of ethnic inequalities and severe mental illness is to be launched today (**Wednesday 11 July 2018**).

Led by the Synergi Collaborative Centre, the national public survey will shape the centre's future work programme, facilitate the creation of research strategies to tackle mental health inequalities and help launch a national campaign to transform health systems.

Reflective of Synergi's co-production of knowledge approach, the 15-minute survey aims to secure the opinions of a wide cross section of the public, including patients, carers, health and social care practitioners, commissioners, NGOs, volunteers and students.

The survey is being launched against a backdrop of longstanding ethnic inequalities, including the fact that compared to the majority population, a diagnosis of schizophrenia is five to six times more likely in Black African people and Black Caribbean people, and nearly three times more likely in South Asian people. As for detention rates among the civil population, Black Caribbean people and Black African people are three times more likely to be detained.

Kamaldeep Bhui CBE, Synergi's Project Lead and Professor of Cultural Psychiatry & Epidemiology, Queen Mary University of London, said: "This is the first time there has been a priority setting exercise for addressing ethnic inequalities in mental health care, especially regarding research. We will be gathering knowledge and assembling views from all stakeholders to establish which are the most pressing issues to tackle and how best to rank them, linked to actions. Rather than replicating past studies, to relearn what has been forgotten, repressed, denied or overlooked, this survey will be forward facing to promote a new approach to set out research areas for impact on reducing aversive ethnic inequalities."



ETHNIC INEQUALITIES • SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS • MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGE

James Nazroo, Synergi’s project partner, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE), the University of Manchester, said: “Addressing the longstanding ethnic inequalities in the experience of severe mental illness is both a pressing need and extremely challenging. One of the things that has prevented progress has been the under-representation of the full range of experiences and understandings of this issue. We will systematically analyse the responses to uncover points of agreement and disagreement to ensure the full range of views are heard. We particularly want to forefront the views of service users and the public, which are often unheard in these discussions.”

Marcia Willis Stewart QC (Hon), Chair of the centre’s Advisory Board and Managing Partner at leading civil rights law firm Birnberg Peirce and Partners, commented: “This piece of work comes at a time when the emerging scandal of the ‘hostile environment’ policy has brought the hardships and pressures that afflict ethnic minority communities and individuals into the public gaze. At the same time equal access to justice for all continues to ebb away. For those who are doubly disenfranchised by ethnicity and fragile mental health, the importance of this public survey cannot be overstated.”

The survey, which will be open to the public for three months, covers a wide range of topics that accommodate intersectionality, the criminal justice system, housing, education, homelessness, health services, racism and commissioning.

The main findings will be shared with policymakers, research institutions and commissioners, and will be made available to the public from November 2018.

Ends

National Public Survey on Ethnic Inequalities and Severe Mental Illness

The survey will be open to the public until 10 October 2018. The official survey link is: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/synergipublicsurvey>

Media contact

If you would like to interview members of the Synergi Collaborative Centre research team about the survey, contact Joy Francis, Words of Colour Productions.

Email: joy@wordsofcolour.co.uk Tel: 0203 176 5646 / 0771 382 7372

Notes to the editor



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Project background:

Queen Mary University of London (Project Lead), the University of Manchester and Words of Colour Productions were awarded £1,245,000 over five years from Lankelly Chase to establish a (virtual) centre of excellence on ethnic inequalities, severe mental illness and multiple disadvantage. Lankelly Chase wants to foster a deeper collective understanding of the nature and extent of the relationship between ethnicity and severe and multiple disadvantage as ethnic minority people experience disproportionate levels of poverty and structural disadvantage, and discrimination within systems.

The **Synergi Collaborative Centre** (synergicollaborativecentre.co.uk) is a national initiative focused on the realities of ethnic inequalities in severe mental illness and which explores how multiple disadvantage generates and sustains such inequalities. Taking a collaborative leadership approach, the centre aims to use the principles of co-production of knowledge and a creative mix of robust research methods. The centre will work closely with commissioners, policymakers and politicians, as well as public service providers, citizens and those experiencing mental distress, to create and deliver a vision to help eradicate ethnic inequalities in severe mental illness and their fundamental causes. The Synergi Collaborative Centre was officially launched on 22 November 2017.

Lankelly Chase (lankellychase.org.uk) is an independent foundation working in partnership with people across the UK to change the systems that perpetuate severe and multiple disadvantage. Originally formed in 1962, Lankelly Chase's work is now focused on creating an environment where people have the skills, motivation and freedom to help create a system that effectively responds to the interlocking nature of severe disadvantages, such as homelessness, drug misuse, violence and abuse, extreme poverty and mental ill health. Lankelly Chase is driven by a belief that people are resourceful and have strengths, and that collectively we can find solutions to creating a fairer society where we are all able to thrive.

PROJECT PARTNERS



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