

The ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health

Policy, impact and public engagement

Our research centre will address mental health problems as a major social and public health issue and will generate measurable impacts in three specified areas: childhood and families, work, and communities. Pathways to impact will be underpinned by a programme of theoretically informed social research that will transform our understanding of the factors and mechanisms that shape mental health and help us generate impact by informing the improvement of policy and strategies for prevention and intervention. Our impacts aim to achieve a greater influence over services for users, innovative policies and services, better employment prospects and help generate changes in approaches to mental health from key groups and publics. We will craft outcomes for actual and potential mental health service users; NGOs, policy makers and service providers; employers; wider community of stakeholders and publics. Within each group we specify outcomes which are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely (SMART) in three domains: *conceptual* (such as knowledge, awareness, values, languages, representations), *capacity building* (such as stakeholder engagement, practices of co-design and co-operation, evidence based practice), and *outcomes* (such as changing strategies, plans, community networks, paths for financial investment).

We will establish a non-academic advisory group with members from each of the four key groups which will monitor, challenge and support the work of the centre (indicative membership below):

We will work with our societal partners in all aspects of the Centre, from conception of research questions through to the translation of what we learn into policy and action. Our aim is to generate evidence to underpin social policies and interventions to prevent and mitigate experienced mental health problems in vulnerable groups.

Our impact related activities will also include

- A series of ground-breaking interdisciplinary studies that produce a step-change in our understanding of the interconnections between society and mental health
- Targeted outputs and engagement which influences policy and practice, specifying realistic and costed policies and interventions to mitigate the effects of adversity on mental health and build individual and community resilience
- Detailed proposals for effective policies and interventions, at local and national levels, co-produced with service users, community organisations, and other stakeholders, such as the city-based 'Thrive' initiatives, based on findings within each of our programmes
- A sustained programme of international collaborative research on society and mental health, including cross-country learning about effective policies and interventions
- Web-based resources and engagement to support socially-based approaches to good mental health and mitigate mental health problems by people, groups and government
- Development of a new generation of interdisciplinary social science researchers with a commitment to translate research into effective policies with long-term, sustainable impacts