



# INPATIENT FAMILIES RESEARCH

## Community of Interest

# NEWSLETTER

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### Inpatient Families Research Updates

We are currently running two projects that relate to our inpatient families research:

Our family visit project (POPI) has been running since March and so far we have interviewed a total of 18 participants, including parents who have been treated in hospital, children and young people who visited their parent in hospital, carers of children and young people and healthcare professionals. We feel privileged to hear these first-hand accounts.

The next stage of the project will be to share a questionnaire with parents, carers and healthcare workers. After this we will work with these groups to design a template for what family visit rooms should look like and materials for families.

In our second project we are going to evaluate how well inpatient units provide family focused care and determine what supports and prevents good practice. We are currently designing this with people with lived experience, along with healthcare workers.

Finally, we are in the process of accessing data collected in the NHS to explore how many people who are treated in hospital are parents and understand more about this group. Updates to follow!

**We are still looking to speak to more people with experience of inpatient treatment for mental health difficulties - especially people who have experience of caring for a child while their parent was in hospital (e.g. a co-parent, grandparent, family member, friend or professional carer) and healthcare professionals. For further details and sign up information, please go to our website below**

**WEBSITE:** [Inpatient Families](#)

**Thank you for joining the Inpatient Families Research Community of Interest and welcome to our first newsletter. We are very pleased to share updates from our current projects with you, along with other news and information.**

### Lived Experience Involvement in Inpatient Families Research

Involving people with lived experience is key to our research and we are very lucky to be working with the wonderful advisors that make up our Lived Experience Advisory Panels (LEAPs). As part of their involvement, advisors have the opportunity to receive training to take part in research activities, such as interviewing and data analysis. Ali (POPI LEAP member) reflects on this experience below:

### Being a Lived Experience Interviewer in Mental Health Research

Being a lived experience researcher is part of who I am now but even recently was outside of anything I thought I could do. A few years ago, as an inpatient in a mental health facility I was at my lowest. Long term mental health and complex physical health difficulties had taken their toll and I had lost hope. But this all started to change after one conversation with a clinical psychologist that pointed me in a new direction - they asked if I knew anything about service user involvement in research and in training mental health professionals. I realised in that conversation that my lived experience which had caused me nothing but distress could benefit others in by shaping research to inform better treatments, services, policy and more. That is how I began and why I am writing this today.

Currently I am part of a cohort of people with lived experience working on an exciting research project exploring how families experience mental health inpatient visits. I have been trained by the excellent team as part of my involvement to interview participants alongside a researcher, as it is helpful for participants to know an interviewer shares their lived experience of mental health difficulties, being an inpatient and parent. Participants entrust their rich and powerful lived experience to become the evidence base of data to inform the project. We owe all participants our gratitude, as it's the narratives of what people have experienced that can really inform and shape a new future; in this case on mental health settings and what is needed to support and maintain the bonds and ties between parent and child when mental health means time away as an inpatient .

This is what motivates me to be involved and has reframed the way I think about research with my new perspective as a lived experience researcher.

**by Ali Bryant**

### NEW RESEARCH PUBLICATION:

### Support for parents in in-patient psychiatric care in English NHS trusts: Freedom of Information survey

Abby Dunn and Sam Cartwright-Hatton have recently published a paper following a national Freedom of Information survey examining how English NHS trusts identify and support parents admitted to psychiatric in-patient care. It highlights significant gaps in data collection, policies, and family-focused support, raising concerns about compliance with Mental Health Act duties to protect parent-child relationships.

The paper can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/bjpsych-bulletin/article/support-for-parents-in-inpatient-psychiatric-care-in-english-nhs-trusts-freedom-of-information-survey/68A92F596FD7E338033681D41F0D3007>

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