

CLAHRCBITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

The Life Rooms: Does a non-clinical response to mental distress work?

(An evaluation)



The Life Rooms is a service run by Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.

The Life Rooms offers a social response to mental distress. The aim of the Life Rooms is to improve mental wellbeing by providing community 'hubs' where people can be supported to access the opportunities that are right for them.

Background

The Life Rooms services include:

- A Recovery College: Free courses to support wellbeing
- Pathways Advice service: Offering a wide range of social support including housing, debt and employment
- Volunteering support: Helping individuals to access volunteering opportunities

The evaluation explored:

- The impact of the Life Rooms on use of clinical services (Quantitative approach)
- The impact of the Life Rooms on individual recovery (Qualitative approach)

Who was involved?

Public Advisors (users of the Life Rooms) were involved at every stage, including project design, data collection and dissemination of findings.

What did we do?

Quantitative approach: We looked at a cohort of Mersey Care service users that had used the Life Rooms and matched these with those that hadn't used the Life Rooms. We then compared their clinical activity data.

Qualitative approach: We also held semi-structured focus groups to explore Mersey Care service users experiences of the Life Rooms.

What we found and what does this mean?

After using the Life Rooms, Mersey Care service users evidence a reduction in clinical cost when compared with Mersey Care service users who did not use the Life Rooms. The following themes were significant for Life Rooms users that took part in the focus groups:

- Life Rooms people and environment are felt to be positive influences
- The Life Rooms are felt as non-judgemental /safe space to share experiences
- Self-development and self-awareness are identified as significant outcomes for users of the Life Rooms
- Social inclusion offers positive impact on the lives of individuals; the Life Rooms are seen as places to facilitate this
- Development of personal goals is identified as a positive outcome of the Life Rooms on individuals

What next?

- Continued development of evaluation work in relation to the Life Rooms impact on clinical care
- Progressing individual impact data through the use of outcome measures
- Maintaining a strong qualitative approach that involves meaningful engagement with users of the Life Rooms and their experiences
- Further exploration of how we can evidence Life Rooms impact on the communities in which it operates
- Continued commitment to co-productive and participatory approaches within evaluation and research
- Prioritising service ethos and user experience in the context of service development

What is NIHR CLAHRC NWC?

The mission of the NIHR CLAHRC NWC is to work collaboratively with Partner organisations and other stakeholders including members of the public to co-produce and conduct high-quality, leadership enhancing, applied research designed to decrease health inequalities and improve the health of the population of the North West Coast.

Find out more

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Partners

